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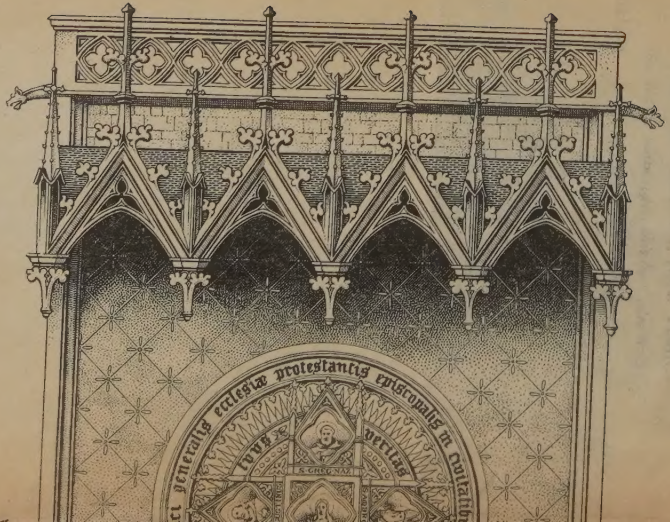
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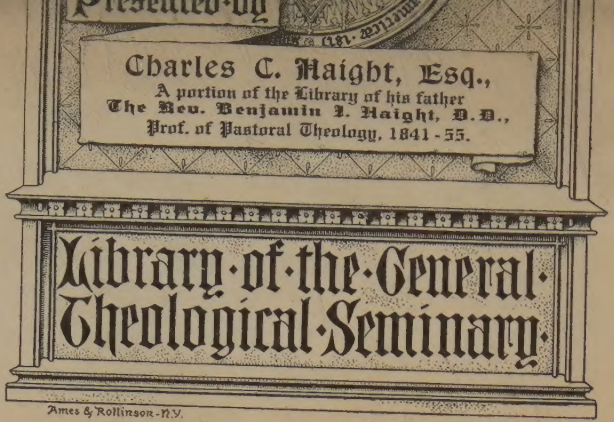
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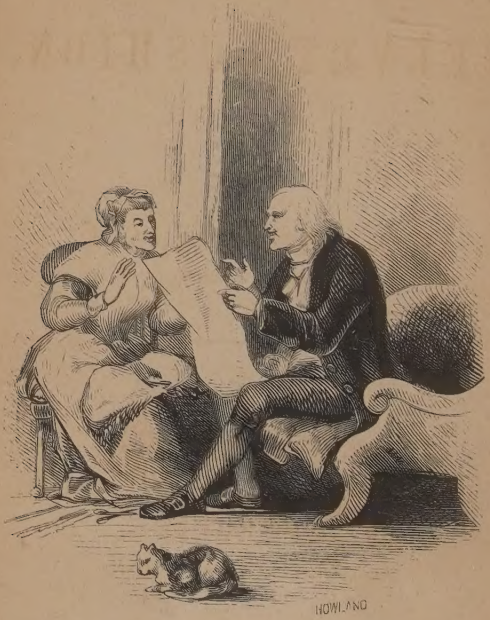

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THE

VELVET CUSHION.

BY

J. W. CUNNINGHAM, A. M.

VICAR OF HARROW.

Senectus natura loquacior.—Cicero.

NEW-YORK:
STANFORD AND SWORDS, 137, BROADWAY.
1850.

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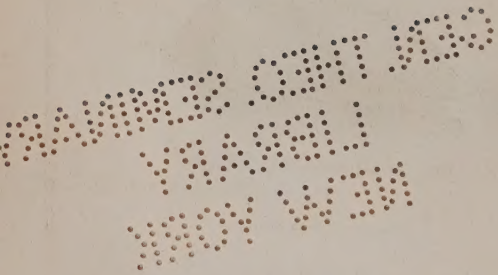


Dedication.

TO THE

Church of England.

With filial reverence I presume to lay upon your altar, the following little history, trusting that it may serve to remind your enemies of some of your excellencies, and your friends of the duties which a good Churchman owes to himself, to his Church, to his country, and to his God.

I am, &c.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

The Author of this little work cannot persuade himself to give another edition of it to the public, without addressing a few words to its readers,

In the first place, he feels it incumbent upon him to express his gratitude to those who have charitably overlooked its numerous defects, and have called upon him, in the space of a few months, for five considerable editions.

Secondly, he has to thank those who have candidly reviewed his work, and enabled him thereby to correct a part, at least, of its faults, and thus to present each successive edition to the public with less glaring deficiencies than before.

And thirdly, he has to express his thankfulness to the harsher critics of this little performance, for having, by the conflicting nature of their

charges, supplied him in the pages of one party, with abundant weapons to repel the assaults of another. It may not be known to any large proportion of his readers, that this little book, instead of being received in its proper character as "the portrait of a good pastor of the Church of England," has been considered by some as a work of a polemical nature. Yet, as if to manifest the injustice of such suspicions, opposite parties have detected in it the most opposite and incongruous intentions. It has been deemed by some a "masked" attack upon Dissent; and by others, which is by far more wonderful, a "masked" attack upon the Establishment. The following passages, for example, are extracted from two Reviews, one professedly conducted by Dissenters,* and the other purporting to be conducted by Churchmen.†

"We soon (says the first of these critics) perceived the author to be zealously attached to the Established Church."—Again, "His object soon became evident—to defend the National Church."—Again, "It [the Velvet Cushion] is a '*masked*' battery, which, unprovoked, has opened its fires alike upon enemies and neutrals—upon all, in

* The Eclectic Review. † The British Critic.

fact, without the pale of an endowed establishment."

"Against the author of this work, (says the other critic,) be he who he may, we prefer the accusation of insidiously sacrificing the general character of that Church which he professes to defend," &c.—And again :

"We should have held its unknown author in much higher estimation, had he boldly declared his design, and had he not under the '*mask*' of affection and love, aimed a blow at that very Church which he professes to venerate."

Now, it is impossible that both the imputations contained in these extracts should be true, and the author ventures confidently to deny the truth of either. He is neither the "masked" enemy of the Establishment, nor the "masked" enemy of Dissent—but is the open and ardent champion of the one, and the open, though, he would hope, tolerant and candid, expositor of the defects of the other.

That some of those, however, who *differ from the Church of England*, should discover in this little volume what appears to them just subject of complaint, the author does not wonder. Strong

attachment to a particular system is apt to render men unduly jealous of any opposition to it. He has, however, the satisfaction to know, that his judgment upon particular evils in the Dissenting system, has been sanctioned by the opinion of some respectable members of that body—and that some persons, halting between the Establishment and Dissent, have been led by this little work to fix on the side of the former. He earnestly prays that the number of these converts may be multiplied; and that the good and wise of all classes may finally rally round the banner of the Establishment, and in her ranks fight the battles of religion against the armies of infidelity and worldliness.

That any *Churchman* should discover in this volume grounds to suspect the author's attachment to the Church of England, is truly astonishing to him. But from the testimonies to the spirit at least of this little book which he has received from some of those highest in Church and State, he is inclined to hope that such suspicions are the feelings of an individual, not the opinions of a body.

As the third edition of this work, with the

name of its author prefixed, had been published ten days before the appearance of the critique in which that imputation is contained, the charge of hostility to the Church of England was not directed against an anonymous and unknown writer, but against a man professedly devoted to her service, and entrusted by her with an office of no light importance and responsibility. When, therefore, he is thus publicly charged with making himself one of a party, and with arrogating to himself peculiar and exclusive titles, he would humbly ask for a single proof of these allegations, in his conversation, in his ministry, or in his writings.

When, also, it is intimated, that he is among those who have forsaken their parochial duties for the prosecution of other general objects, he thinks it right to answer, that in the space of three years, he has not been absent more than three Sundays from the pulpit of his vicarage. He presumes also generally to state, that he knows no party but that of the Church of England, and admits no duty to be so imperative with regard to himself, as the instruction and guardianship of that family and parish which it has pleased God to commit to his charge.

It remains only for the author to apologize for thus speaking of himself. But he felt it due to his readers, to his own character, and to a large parish, whose judgment of their minister might be misled by such representations, to state, that in supposing him to be an ardent friend of the Establishment, no one is deceived—that he is, in truth, its fond admirer—the anxious, though humble defender of its doctrines and discipline—that he most joyfully lives in its communion—and that upon a dying bed he expects and desires, through the mercy of God, to say, with old Herbert, when asked in what prayers they should supplicate for him—"Give me," said he, "the prayers of my mother, the Church—there are none like hers."

THE

VELVET CUSHION.

CHAPTER I.

The Vicar of a small parish church, whose turrets nodded over one of the most picturesque lakes of Westmoreland, although no believer in necromancy, stood aghast one day at perceiving the increased bulk of his velvet cushion. Few men could have better pretensions to be intimately acquainted with this throne of theology than himself. He had pressed with a succession of excellent sermons, for five and thirty years, that side of it which was now uppermost. And he was scarcely less familiar with the other side. For on his first institution to the living, he had, in the true spirit of economy, used that face which was worst for upwards of ten years. But when his zeal had actually beaten a hole in it, the digni-

ty of the establishment demanded a change: and this brought the other side into use. Nor was it merely a sabbatical intercourse with the cushion which had given him this intimate knowledge of it. His attention, since the moment of his induction to the vicarage, had been particularly drawn to it by many current rumors in the parish. It was reported, for instance, to be one of the oldest cushions in the three kingdoms. It had certainly afforded a resting place to the divinity of fifteen or twenty of his predecessors in the vicarage. Nor had even they known it in the earliest stages of its ecclesiastical career. Report said that it had seen many vicissitudes, and travelled through successive ages—that it had been swept by the tunic of a Pope's nuncio—had descended to the pulpit of one of the first Puritans—had been expelled by some of the Cromwellites, as an impious adjunct to the simplicity of primitive worship—had risen again with the rising fortunes of the monarchy—and, after many chances and changes, had climbed the mountains of Westmoreland, to spend the years of its grand cli-

macteric in the quiet and unambitious pulpit of the vicarage. Now, as our vicar was somewhat of an antiquarian, all these rumors invested the cushion with inconceivable dignity in his eyes. He considered it as a sort of monarch in retirement. He never touched it without feeling himself carried back into the most remote periods. He would often display it with a smile of triumph to his clerical visitors, whose larger benefices were, in his view, but a poor compensation for so splendid a possession. And this he continued to do, though he rarely succeeded in creating any other surprise in his auditors, than that the parish should not be liberal enough to find him a better. Being moreover a thinking man, he would often philosophize over his cushion: and marvel what effect the same number and variety of sermons which had been delivered in its presence would have produced upon the mind of a sentient being—which of the systems, all equally indifferent to the cushion, he would have embraced—whether he would have settled down, as the vicar deemed he ought, into a sound

Churchman, or whether, amidst conflicting opinions, he would, like a vessel amidst contending tides, have been left as neutral and motionless as the cushion itself. "O!" he would add, "that I could but see the history of my cushion." And as he began to fall into that common infirmity of age, the recurring often to a few darling topics, his neighbors were compelled to hear the wish pretty often repeated. I mention this circumstance as tending, perhaps, in some measure, to explain its present mysterious expansion. But to return to our history.

Putting these various circumstances together, I may surely venture to repeat the assertion, that few divines could have better pretensions than our venerable vicar to be acquainted with their cushions. Neither time, nor opportunity, nor importunity, had been wanting for the fullest scrutiny of its shape, bulk, and complexion. Whence, then, could the aforesaid expansion of the cushion arise? He put on his glasses, then rubbed his eyes, and then the glasses themselves—but, he still saw his old friend with a new face. Conceiving, however, that his

eyes and glasses, however long and confidently trusted, might not, after all, be infallible—conceiving, in short, anything more probable than the mutability of his immutable cushion, he resolved to bring it to the test of another sense. What, then, was his confusion and dismay, when, having put his hand on it, instead of finding it yield, as usual to his touch, he felt some resistance to his pressure. Here was, indeed, cause for terror. He absolutely started back. It happened, unfortunately, to be verging towards November, and the fifth of that terrible month at once arose, like an apparition, before him. A rumor had lately reached him that the Catholics were petitioning our good old King for emancipation; but what if they were secretly taking a more summary method for the accomplishment of their wishes. What if, instead of filling cellars with combustibles, their scheme should be to cram velvet cushions with them! What, if the very instruments of ecclesiastical dignity and usefulness were now to be converted into instruments of assassination! What, if every

true son of the Church was designed, at some given moment, at some critical conjuncture, perhaps in the precise act of praying for Church and King, to receive the contents of his cushion in his bosom. Horror, doubt, suspicion, the pride of discovery, the fancied smell of gun-powder, the fear of a premature explosion, were almost too much for the old gentleman. Such a trembling of nerves—such a revulsion of blood to the heart, he had scarcely ever experienced before. As his system, however, began to recover, he discovered somewhat less ground for alarm. But, whether his suspicions might be well or ill-founded, nothing appeared to be of such importance as investigation and secrecy. His resolution, therefore, was soon taken. In the dusk of the evening he mustered courage to enter the church alone, to seize the supposed organ of conspiracy, and to carry it to his own study. But, when there, what was to be done with it? There was one bosom which shared all his joys and sorrows. He had a wife who was the pillar of his little fabric of worldly comforts. Their two heads, laid

together, rarely failed to hit upon a contrivance for every daily emergency; and at length, after a much longer conference than usual, it was resolved, at once and heroically, to unbowel the cushion. The solemnity may be conceived with which the aged couple seated themselves to the task of ripping up their velvet friend, with a view of tearing from the womb those plots on which the destiny of the nation might be suspended. But how shall I describe the amazement and the joy with which he, and therefore she, saw inscribed at the head of a large roll of paper, which soon met their eager eyes,—"My own history." It scarcely occurred to our ecclesiastic, that velvet cushions cannot ordinarily either think or write —for having just begun to study the new system of education, he did not know to what perfection it might have been suddenly brought. Nor did it at all occur to him, that his above mentioned philosophisings on the cushion had been often listened to with profound attention by a thin, queer, ill-looking, dirty, retired sort of a man in the next village, who was said by the country

folks to be either a conjuror or an author. The wish of his heart was granted to him—a history of his velvet cushion—and little recked he whence it came, or who was the historian. Another candle was instantly lighted, his glasses polished, the sofa wheeled nearer to the fire, and he began to read the memoir which follows.

CHAPTER II.

"The first place in which I remember to have seen the light was in the shop of an upholsterer in Fleet-street, in the days of bloody Queen Mary. You, sir, who feel something, though I rejoice to say little, of the ravages of time in your own person, (the old lady, notwithstanding the qualifying word 'little' looked somewhat grave and angry,) can easily believe that I have lost much of my original dignity. I was then as splendid as gold and tassels could make me. Several of my species lay near me, and none of them less magnificently caparisoned than myself. Of these, alas, I soon lost sight. They have long since fallen before that besom which sweeps the high and the low, the velvet and the serge, into one indiscriminate grave. I soon heard myself destined by the master of the warehouse, to the pulpit of a great church in the metropolis, and thither I was, next day, trans-

ported in a coach. And here, sir, I beg to observe, that I was not always able to write my own history. In fact, when I entered the Church, nothing could be more ignorant than myself. I had heard only the conversation of the manufactory. But my new circumstances gave me great advantages. It soon occurred to me, that, in so busy a world, even a cushion could not be meant to be idle. As my nature, therefore, unfitted me for action, I determined to give myself wholly to thought and speculation. You, sir, who both think and act, will not despise those who do only the former. The Arabs, indeed, as I have heard, when they take a prisoner, always first ask him what he can do? And when a French savan, whom they caught, hoping to escape manual drudgery, told them in reply, that he was accustomed only to sedentary pursuits—they, by way of turning him to account, actually tarred and feathered him, and set him to hatch eggs. But Arabs are barbarians, and in my native country I could not fear any such indignity. But to return.—If my nature disposed me to thought, so did

my circumstances. From the Pisgah of the pulpit I have seen most of the great men of successive ages, whom piety, custom, accicident, or their wives, have brought to church. In the same commanding situation I have heard all the best preachers of three centuries. Thus all the grand questions in religion and morality, and, by dint of fasts and thanksgivings, in politics, have been submitted to my consideration. And, when conveyed for warmth during the week, from the pulpit to the vestry, I have heard all sorts of questions discussed, in all sorts of tempers, by all sorts of men. The clerks, sextons, and pew openers, also a class of persons falsely thought to have little to do with the affairs of the Church, except to take one fee for burying the dead, and sometimes another for digging them up again, have given me much information. They play, indeed, inferior parts in the ecclesiastical drama; but, as far as free and fluent elocution goes to form an actor, they have probably few superiors. Amidst such privileges, I trust I have not been altogether idle.—And if you are curious to see the re-

sult of my meditations, and to compare them with your own, you have now the opportunity. The paper in your hands contains an account of much that I have heard and seen, with my own comments upon it."

"Was there ever such a treasure, my love?" said the old gentleman. She could think of no such treasure except, indeed, the aged vicar himself. It was not that she had the same instinctive and antiquarian attachment for the cushion with himself; but she had taught herself pretty much to love whatever he said. Indeed fifty years of intimate communion were not likely to leave much difference of taste. Perhaps, with the exception of two habits of the good vicar, there was scarcely an act of his life to which she could not reconcile herself. The habits which I mean, were occasionally smoking a single pipe; and sometimes, though very rarely indeed, preaching a borrowed sermon. The truth, as to these points, was, she could ill endure that a mouth, ordained to be the channel of his own kindness and wisdom, should be degraded into, either a mere conveyance of

smoke or of the thoughts of other people. As to other things, they were like the strings of two finely tuned instruments brought into contact—touch the one and the other vibrated. I have always been deeply interested in this aged couple. All the world are delighted to watch the young as they grow up together. To me it is not less delightful to see the old wear off together; to see two creatures, of distinct tempers and passions, by degrees melting into one; to see how happy those may be, who habitually prefer the happiness of another to their own; to see, finally, real love, like a flower blooming amidst ruins, surviving the vigor of the body, and all those attractions on which it is thought to depend. Some fanciful writer has imagined, that mankind fall from heaven in pairs; and that, unless the right pair meet again after their descent, they can neither of them be happy. If this be true, I should certainly imagine that this venerable couple dropped from the skies together: at all events, they will, I doubt not, together ascend the skies. But as they will frequently appear in the course of this his-

tory, the reader may judge of all these things for himself. In the meantime I proceed to another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

The old gentleman, then, having put both body and mind into the attitude of attention, and heard with laudable patience and forbearance a caution from his careful lady against hurting himself by reading too loud, read on as follows:—

"As I said, sir, I was now the cushion of a Catholic church, and I assure you that I soon felt all the benefit of my recent consecration and peculiar appointment. A good Catholic treats even his cushion with reverence. Indeed, I had some reason to suspect, that an old woman of the congregation considered me either as the relic of a saint, or as the saint himself suffering under some especial penance. For certain it is, she often approached me with crosses and genuflections.—But, sir, Popery possessed some more substantial and general claims upon my regard than those founded upon the honors it conferred on myself.

When I looked around on the edifice into which I was introduced, I was at once awed and delighted. The vast gothic arches, the sombre light, the general air of majesty, all inspired the most lofty ideas of the being to whom the temple was dedicated. And here, sir, as I am likely to say a few hard things of Popery presently, I wish, by way of set off, to remind you good Protestants, that you owe to Popery almost everything that deserves to be called by the name of a church. I have heard you, sir, who ought, I am sure, to read nothing in vain, read very emphatically a brief for the repair of a Church originally built by Papists, which even with the odd sixpence slipped in by yourself for the reputation of the parish, did not collect above nine-pence. I have sometimes thought, that if Protestantism had been the first faith of the country, and the present niggardly spirit as to public edifices had prevailed, you must all have been field preachers for want of a church to preach in. But to return, sir. I soon discovered that, after admiring the magnificence of Popery, my topics of admiration

were nearly exhausted. I no sooner heard parts of the Bible than I began to compare them with what I saw and heard around me. And I need not tell you, sir, that the Bible and Popery do not very strictly harmonize. I saw an endless round of childish ceremonies—water said to cleanse from sin—unction that at once prepared the sinner for heaven—relics of the cross which put together, were twice as big as the cross itself could have been—figures of saints said to have fallen from heaven, but carved, as I heard the clerk say, about fifty years before, out of the remnants of an old pew—images said to open their eyes, to cure diseases, to send victory, and so on—but all of which, I, who was in the secret, knew to have been created by a neigboring joiner. All this, however, though bad enough, was not the worst. I actually saw the priest hold up a piece of bread which he affirmed to be Christ, and all the people fell down and worshipped it. As to much that I heard, I have thought it an implicit duty to forget it as soon as possible. Exceptions, indeed, there were. But, too of-

ten, I heard little but certain maxims and histories, of no authority or use, which they called traditions. Sometimes these were exchanged for fabulous histories of the very saints I have mentioned as having been manufactured by a neighboring joiner. Sometimes, also, I heard of the duty of penance, of worshipping the Virgin, of burning and pinching men into orthodoxy, and of confession to the priest. As to this last duty, I observed, that what many seem to think a part of it was most rigidly performed, namely, the statement which the confessionists gave of his own excellencies. I heard much also of absolution; and especially remember the man who bought at a high price, from the Pope's nuncio, absolution for three months in advance for whatever sin he might commit; and, in virtue of his license, before the expiration of the patent, robbed this very nuncio of all he had pilfered by the sale of this and many other absolutions. I heard occasionally also from a neighboring court, what was still more terrible—the crackling of fagots, and the groans of heretical victims. But, sir, as I do not love find-

ing fault, I will here stop, confessing, however, that I sincerely partook in the joy expressed by the old clerk, who though he called himself for convenience a Papist, during this bloody reign, was nevertheless too conscious of his heresy not daily to expect suspension by one of his own bell-ropes —when told, by the verger, that the Queen was dead. I love royalty, and do not mean to judge her as an individual. The religion of her royal father was certainly not such as to recommend his mode of faith to her. Persecution also was the fashion of the day. Moreover, she was a woman of weak understanding in the hands of crafty priests. In short, I heartily hope that her majesty had some better excuses to offer than you zealous Protestants have discovered. But, as I said, I rejoiced that she was gone, and unfeignedly hoped Popery would be buried in the grave with her.

Here the venerable reader laid down the manuscript; and she, whose oracle he was, laid down her work to listen to his observations upon it. He took off his spectacles, that, not looking outwards, he might, as it

were, see inwards the better, placed his right hand upon the Bible which lay on his table, as if afraid, in his argument, of letting it go—and thus began.

"I think, my dear," he said, "it is difficult to speak too ill of Popery as a religion."

"I should think it is my love," she answered.

"It was once," he added, "superstitious, formal, cold, and cruel. Above all, it did not teach men to fix their hopes and affections upon that Saviour who has been, my love, all our hope for near fifty years." The mention of these fifty years would have ensured her assent to a far more questionable proposition.

"And then," said he, "the errors of the Church were perpetuated by their own practices. This blessed book," and he raised his hand, and reverently brought it down again upon the sacred volume as he spoke, "this blessed book, which would have corrected the evil, was kept out of sight. They were sick, and would not let the physician prescribe for them."

"That, my dear," said the old lady, whose thoughts were instantly turned by the word 'physician' to a little argument between them the day before, on the subject of a complaint of his own, "that, my dear, is the fault of some better men than themselves."

"Now," added he, pretending not to notice her remark, "a consequence of this was, that the disease continually gained ground." She, still applying the remark nearer home, fetched a deep sigh. "Hence," he added, "an evil once introduced into the system was never got rid of. Still, while I condemn the religion, I cannot but love many of the professors of it. There are few authors whom I read with greater delight, as you know, than Pascal and Fenelon. The one is all reason, and the other all love."

"How happened it, my dear," she asked, "that such men as these never discovered the defects of their religion?"

"They never suffered themselves," he answered, "to look at its defects. Their unbounded reverence for the priest did not

permit them to use their own judgment in opposition to his." Her own unbounded reverence for one particular priest made this answer at once intelligible and decisive with the old lady. He added, "I feel disposed to condemn the temper of the present age as it respects Popery in two points! In one party, there is too little dislike of the religion. In another, too little charity for some of those who hold it. I acknowledge, for instance, that Popery has some things in it not likely to inspire loyalty for a Protestant Sovereign or patriotism to an heretical country. But still I believe there are many Papists both loyal and patriotic. Their very refusal to take our oaths, inclines me to hope that they respect an oath. And their refusal to part with any title of their own faith for a desirable end gives some promise, I think, that they will not maintain that faith by wrong means."

"Would you, then," she asked, "have voted for Catholic emancipation?"

"The country," he answered, "has nothing either to hope or fear from my vote. And in this instance, as in all oth-

ers, I rejoice that she has wiser counsellors. But this I will say to you," and smiling, as if at an old friend, "to my cushion here, who has listened to all my poor sayings, with extraordinary patience for above half a century—that, whilst I like the concessions, I tremble at the ground on which the Catholics ask them. They claim them as a right; and I could grant them only as a favor; and therefore, under present circumstances, not at all. Admit them to be a right, and the Catholics have the same right to ask for a Popish King and Church. Consider them as a favor, and then we may stop at the point of danger. And sure I am, my love, I should not be so anxious to discover that point as to be likely to stop too soon. Governments may easily be too sharp-sighted in discovering the limits at which toleration should cease. This error I would anxiously avoid. I desire to see the edifice of our constitution last as long as the rocks by which we are surrounded; and, for this purpose, I would inscribe on its walls the sacred name of that 'Charity' which '*never faileth.*'"

"But, my dear, do you not think the character of Popery improved?"

"Not so much as I hoped. There, is, however, one circumstance which promises a great improvement in our own country—I mean the universal diffusion of the Bible. It is like letting in the sun upon the owls and bats. Popery has, perhaps, too much affinity with the corruption of our nature to die a natural death, but, I begin to hope it may be suffocated by the Bible."

"Suppose, my love," said the old lady, to whom the mere name of the Bible always suggested her own duties with regard to it, "we now read our own chapter and go to bed." They did read their chapter, and rose from it, as I have heard them say they always did, loving God and one another even better than they did before.

CHAPTER IV.

The next morning our aged Minister rose early, and, perhaps the reader may think, immediately resumed his seat with the darling manuscript in his hand. But no. It was a rule with him always to follow up his morning petitions to his Father in heaven, by resuming the study of that blessed book with which he had closed the day. After this he called together his small circle of grey-headed servants, to join him in devout supplication for blessings upon his family and upon the world. Then he breakfasted. Then, chiefly, though not exclusively, by devout reading, he laid up materials for the sermon of the next Sunday. Then he visited, perhaps, some cottages in his village, instructed the ignorant, rebuked the careless, or bound up the wounds of the broken-hearted; and taught them, without appealing to his own case, though no one who saw him could help making the application, how '*happy* is the people who

have the Lord for their God.'—I will not say, however, that he did not shorten some of his other employments, (and particularly a little argument with a farmer about the exact amount of his tithes,) to return to the manuscript. At length the venerable couple seated themselves, much in the same form as before, and he began to read.

"The Clerk, sir, had no sooner shaken hands with the Verger, and both with the Beadle, than they all hobbled to the belfry, seized, as by a sort of impulse, all the ropes, and shook with the notes of acclamation every stone in the steeple. I am willing to hope it was not so much because they had lost the old Queen, as because they had got a new one. However that might be, all the churches followed our example. It was a sort of general jubilee. The ceremony of a coronation was almost superfluous; for the Queen was already enthroned in the hearts of the people. Indeed, it was next to a miracle, what with bonfires and fire-works, that the people, in their zeal for Church and Queen, did not fire all the churches in the country, and burn the

Queen in her bed. And now, sir, let me tell you of my good fortune. The Queen herself, with her Court, came to that very church of which I had the honor to be the Cushion, to give thanks for the rescue of herself and country. I believe such a Te-Deum was scarcely ever sung. Gratitude, love, loyalty, 'bowed the heart of the people as the heart of one man.'"

"O," said our old divine, "how I should have rejoiced to have been there!"

"I rejoice, my love," said the old lady, who saw, at a glance, that he could not have been both at church with the Queen, and in the Vicarage with herself, "I can truly say, that you were not there." He resumed his reading.

"I will not detain you, sir, with minutely stating the occurrences of the day. The Queen, I think, must have learned two lessons—to value the love of her people—and to feel how strong a title, and how sure a way to that love, are supplied by the profession and maintenance of true religion. I have seen enough to convince me that the people of this country, though loyally blind

for a time to the faults of their King, yet never love even a King long if he does not deserve to be loved. I now go on to tell you about the changes which soon took place. The holy water, and tapers, and oil, all vanished: and, never hearing anything of them in the Bible, I was glad they were gone. I was pleased, however, to see that there was no impatience to get rid of old things, if either good in themselves, or if a good reason could be found for keeping them. Some of the finery, indeed, was removed from the church, and I myself was stripped of some mock jewellery, originally worked into my corners; but, I declare that I think both the church and its cushion looked the better for their deprivations. I observed, also, that the little confession boxes were nailed up, which, by the by, deprived me of a source of daily amusement, and of much information, given by some of the Confessionists about the faults of their neighbors.—In the liturgy, though many alterations were made, the same dislike of unnecessary change was observable. They prayed no longer, indeed, either to the Vir-

gin or to the Saints. But they seemed rejoiced to continue the worship of God himself in the language of their fathers. Prayers you know, sir, many of which were inherited from almost the first Christians, could not spoil by merely passing through the hands of the Pope. But I was chiefly struck with the change in the doctrine of the preachers. Before, the preaching was rare, and I used chiefly to hear of the merits of the Saints—of the happiness of those who bought with money an interest in those merits—of works of supererogation, and of Purgatory. I do not say I heard nothing better than this. Some who wandered farther from Popery, in my judgment, kept nearer to the Bible. But I mean to say, that thus preached many of the clergy; and thus did I, and most of the multitude below me, understand them. Now, however, sir, I perceived, as I said, a great change; and, that I may not detain you too long, I will only state the three doctrines which, as by a sort of resurrection, started up from the grave of Popery, and appeared to all the city. The reformers taught that man was

a fallen creature—that he could be acquitted before God only through a reliance in Christ, and lastly, that God, by His Holy Spirit, could alone give him a new heart, and fit him for the kingdom of heaven. These, sir, are your own doctrines, and I the rather state them to you, because I know you will rejoice to find that you are preaching those doctrines proclaimed by your ancestors under the axe of the executioner." This was almost too much for our good vicar. If there was a wish of his heart, it was to know that his doctrines were cast in the mould of the reformation. A tear rolled down his manly cheek,—but it was not a tear of grief—for, at the conclusion of this paragraph, he emphatically exclaimed, "thank God!"—and she who felt all His mercies to be her own—said, "Amen!"

He read on. "The divines of those days," continued the manuscript, "differed considerably from some good men now. And if you will not think me tedious, I will state the nature of *this difference*. Your ancestors, then, sir, dwelt more on those

important doctrines in which all agreed, and less on those minuter points, such as Calvinism and Arminianism, on which some of them differed.

"They preached less controversially and more practically. Those Homilies, sir, of which I have heard you read some to your flock, are an excellent sample of the divinity at the day of their birth. When I hear them, I almost fancy some of my first friends risen from their graves again. There may be less head in them than in the more systematic divinity of your day; but there is more heart, more of the careless beauty of Scripture, more of 'the brave neglect,' which characterizes the noble enthusiasm of Saints and Martyrs.—But I perceive that I am beginning to indulge in that garrulity so general with the old in praising old times, and therefore I will say no more on this subject."

"I wish it had said as much again on the subject," said the old gentleman.

"I wish it had," echoed his lady,—"and I should say of its garrulity what you remember our good old King said to a writer

who apologized for having written *so much :* —' I should have thought so too, sir, if you had not written so well.'" The Vicar was as much pleased with this compliment to his cushion, as if it had been to himself; and, though he had heard the story at least a hundred times, thought he had never heard it so well applied before.—He read on as follows :—

"Things, however, were too good to last. I soon perceived, even at church, some persons who treated all ceremonies and forms with a sort of suspicion. They seemed to expect Popery to start from behind them. At length the friends of the establishment began to notice the subject in their sermons —to decry rashness and enthusiasm—to speak of a new discipline fished up from the lake of Geneva—to contend that the opposite extreme from Popery was as bad as Popery itself. I have heard Hooker* him-

* The accuracy of the Author's assertion of the Calvinism of Hooker having been questioned by some of his readers, he begs to add, in confirmation of this statement, the following passage, taken almost at random from a sermon whose very title ("*Of the certainty and perpetuity of*

self—" ("Hooker!" said the old gentleman, and almost leaped from his seat) "denounce the rising spirit of disaffection to Church and State;—'which, though now (he said) a mere cloud in the horizon, would soon darken the face of the heavens.' But he prophesied in vain. The tumult increased; and, I grieve to say, that the effect of this spirit of disaffection upon the staunch Churchman was not such as to allay the heat. Disgusted with the rash foes to Popery, they somewhat lessened their hostility to that religion. Elizabeth herself began to regard the two extremes of Puritanism and Popery with equal dislike. Her successor, James, scarcely hated Popery—and Charles the First, perhaps, preferred it." At this sentence, our venerable divine sighed, and for a moment, felt displeased with his

Faith in the Elect,") is almost demonstrative of his Calvinism:—

"Their faith (says this illustrious divine) when it is at strongest, is but weak; yet, even then, when it is at the weakest, so strong, that utterly it never faileth, it never perisheth altogether, no not in them who think it extinguished in themselves."—*Oxford Edition, Vol. III. p.* 526.

velvet memorialist. If he had a prejudice in the world, it was in favor of the first Charles. It rose partly from his love of royalty,—partly from his father having, though he had carefully shut up the rest of Hume, given him, when a boy, those few exquisite pages to read, in which he records the death of the King, partly from a slight infusion of Scotch blood in his veins,—partly from the virtues, especially of the latter part of the life of Charles, and the terrors of his death, which have invested him with a species of martyrdom in the eyes of Englishmen. I have sometimes suspected also that an exquisite portrait of Charles, by Vandyke, which had descended in the old gentleman's family, and always hung in his study, had a little to do with his feeling. So ample a forehead, so meek a smile, so pensive an eye, could not surely belong to a bad man.—But whatever might be the source of his prejudice, certain it is, that he felt it. When, therefore, he came to this sentence, he stopped, shut the manuscript, took a few turns in the room, looked at his picture, and at length, gravely said,

—"I do not like to serve our kings like those of Egypt, and bring them to judgment after their death. That poor Scotch Minister had a kinder heart, who, though he loathed Queen Mary living, said, when his brethren, after her death, were emptying the vials of their hatred upon her,—'Nay, bury her, for she is a King's daughter.' The temptations of Kings excuse many of their faults in my eyes."

"You and I, my love," said his wife, "have often thanked God that our temptations were so few. But, had Charles any great faults?"

"One of the greatest," he replied, "was, perhaps, that of surrounding his person with dissolute men, that in the hour of his calamity, few good ones dared to trust him.—But his misfortunes, I think, were greater than his faults. I am surprised men are not disposed more to pity and love, than to condemn him."

"*You*, my dear," she said, "love every body."

"Seventy years' acquaintance with myself," he answered, "has taught me that it

becomes us not anxiously to search out each other's nakedness,—but rather to approach the faults of others backwards, and throw the mantle over them."

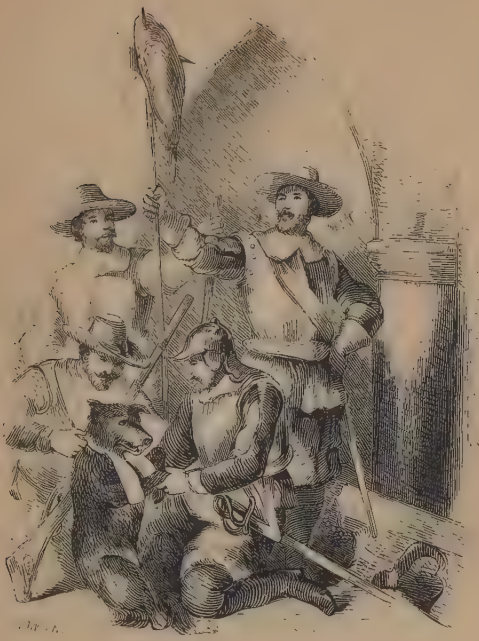
"I think, my dear," she said, "the picture seems to cast an eye of reproach upon that page of the manuscript."—

"I think it does," he answered, "and so, perhaps, we had better turn to another." They accordingly did, and read as follows.

CHAPTER V.

"As I have already hinted at the spirit of the Church, and at that of the enemies of the Church, in the days just after Queen Elizabeth, I will now pass them over, and hasten forward to a period most important to myself and to the nation.—One morning, almost before sunrise, I saw a band of soldiers enter the church. They were strange-looking men, with hair cut short and rounded,—dealt much in scriptural language, often metaphorically, and as often inaccurately used. They frequently denounced Church and King. On a sudden I was confounded to hear a man, who looked like a sergeant, give the word, and the band flew to work. In a moment they broke down the rails of the altar, beheaded a fine Magdalene, put the silver chalice and candlesticks into their pockets, bayoneted a surplice, fastened the vicar's band upon a great black dog which had followed them into the Church, dashed the Common Prayer

Book through a fine painted window,—and at last mounted, I tremble while I tell it, the pulpit, and the sergeant himself, with one end of his halbert, cut away my lace and tassels, and with the other ran me through the bowels." "True, I declare, my dear," said the old gentleman; "for see here the two holes made by the sacrilegious instrument,—holes of which you know how perplexed I have often been to discover the origin." "Holes," she replied, "which I darned for the last time so carefully last Candlemas." "Holes," said he, "which I always deemed the disgrace of the establishment, but which henceforward I shall charge upon their Puritan authors." In short, fifty years had associated so many circumstances with these holes in the cushion, that it was a considerable time before they could get back to the cushion itself. At length, however, he read on.—"I need not say, sir, that this rough treatment gave me no prejudice in favor of the new governors, in Church and State. Nor, indeed, can I, to this moment, comprehend how either beheading the King, or perforating a



"The sergeant himself, with one end of his halbert cut away my lace and tassels." Page 48

cushion, could have any necessary connexion with the Reformation of Religion. But still, sir, indiscriminate censure of the Puritans would be highly unjust. The first of the race were considerably the best. They were men who had little, perhaps, to condemn in them, except a superstitious alarm at Popery. Their doctrines were in general pure! their practice correct, and some of them were not merely among the best Christians, but the finest gentlemen of the day. And many such individuals were to be found among those to whom this name was given, even in the worst times—men who ought never to be confounded with the enthusiasts of their day. In the times of the usurpation, indeed, when religion became a step to court favor—when the motto of the day was, 'the praise of God in our mouth, and a two-edged sword in our hand,'—when insurrection against established authority was placed among the virtues; when learning was too often considered as a dead weight round the neck of religion, and no man was deemed fit to mount a pulpit who could not first make one, when the fine arts, and all

other sources of harmless refreshment were proscribed—then, many on whom the name of Puritan was bestowed, deserved it, to say the least, as little as any of their contemporaries. The Royalists, though many of them without religion, generally retained the form. Some, though by no means all, of the latter class of Puritans, had neither form nor religion."—

"Is not that a little harsh my love?" said the old lady.

"It may be so," answered he. "But, to be sure, the times were truly awful. In common times men sin against their principles, and then one hopes their principles may mend them. But some of these men rebelled upon principle,—shed royal blood for conscience sake. What, therefore, could mend them?"

"*You*," she replied, "if they could have heard your last sermon on peace of conscience."—How far the Vicar agreed with his lady, it is impossible to say, as he said nothing himself, but read on.

"I cannot help thinking," said the old gentleman, after a pause, "that their scheme

of religion, in some instances, spoiled their tempers. I do indeed heartily commend their abstinence from vicious or dissipating amusements. But surely, cheerfulness is not a crime. That God who is 'Our Father,' must love to see his creatures happy. If, then, instead of perpetual fasting, and 'will worship,' they had gone abroad among the glories of nature,—if even they had refreshed their spirits by a commerce with science and art, I think, by the mercy of God, they would have become happier themselves, and therefore less jealous of the happiness of others. They would have shaken off the dew of their own comforts on all around them." Whilst he said this, his lady, as if to illustrate his argument, was straining her eyes and muscles to release a fly, which had audaciously leaped into the cream pot. She was so happy herself, she would not willingly suffer even a fly to be miserable. He began once more to read.

"As, sir, I once had the honor of seeing a Queen at church, so now I had my curiosity gratified by the sight of the Protector. He had a peculiar countenance, and might,

perhaps, have sat with equal propriety for the portrait of an enthusiast, or a hypocrite."

"Is not that impossible?" asked the old lady.

"Not at all," replied the Vicar. "Men often deceive others till they learn to deceive themselves."

"But let us proceed—"

"He was evidently in a state of much perturbation—wore a sort of armor under his coat, and seemed to look at every man as an enemy. Nothing seemed to give him any satisfaction, till the preacher said, that 'men once in a state of grace could never fall away.' His complacent smile at that moment, seemed to show that he deemed himself to have been in that state."

"Surely," said the old lady, "either he was mistaken, or the doctrine is false."

Now, of all things in the world, our good Vicar disliked peremptory decisions upon important subjects. He did not pretend to see quite as far and as clearly as some of his neighbors. Indeed, he thought the Bible itself not quite so decided about

Calvinism and Arminianism, as many of the readers of the Bible would pretend, and used to say, "I think half the Bible would have suited Calvin or Arminus much better than the whole." A great text with him was, "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children, that we may do them." And a favorite question to himself, when any difficulties were beginning to perplex him, was, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." In obedience to which, his custom was, when any one started a controverted topic which he had no hopes of settling, to jump up, as well as he could at seventy-five, and to 'follow' his Master in some work of love or usefulness.

I heard him once say to a good man, but rather an anxious disputant, "Forgive me, my dear friend—but I cannot spend my time in examining these thorns upon the hill of Zion, when I am mercifully permitted to gather its flowers.—Come, and let us look together at the goodly proportions, the majesty, the splendor of the temple, and listen to the promises of its mercy-seat—

and leave others to pluck the few weeds which have sprung up in its Courts."

If this was an error, it was so happy an error for himself and his parish, that it would have been great inhumanity to have taught him better. When his lady stated the above-named dilemma, then, although he felt that certain strong partisans might have been inconvenienced by its horns, he took his usual jump, and simply said, "Whatever may be thought of the doctrine, there can be no doubt that Cromwell made a very bad use of it. But I heartily wish we, none of us, abused even better doctrines. I am not at all sure, for instance, that it is not a presumptuous reliance upon the goodness of God; or in other words, an abuse of the doctrine of divine mercy, that has kept me at home to-day, when I should have gone to visit old Dame Wilkins."

"What, my dear," said she, "do you think the best means of checking in oneself the abuse of good doctrines?"

"Prayer to God," he answered, "in the first instance—next to that, good practice. In general, our lives ruin our doctrines.

And so, my dear, let us go to Mary Wilkins directly." Her bonnet was soon on, and they hobbled down the village almost as fast as if their house had been on fire. Mary Wilkins was a poor, good old woman, to whom the Vicar's visit, three times a week, had become almost one of the necessaries of life. It was now two hours beyond the time he usually came; and, had she been awake, she would really have been pained by the delay. But, happily, she had fallen into a profound sleep, and when he put his foot on the threshold, and in his old-fashioned way said, "Peace be with you," she was just awaking. This comforted our good old man, and, as he well knew where all comfort comes from, he thanked God in his heart even for this.

CHAPTER VI.

The venerable couple had seated themselves to tea,—the lady, in spite of her lord's decided preference for green, had dextrously slipped in, for the sake of his nerves, an undue proportion of black, the old sofa was wheeled around, the fire stirred; Shock had leaped up into a vacant chair, the candles were trimmed, and, in short, all was prepared for the resumption of his reading between every cup and mouthful, when a neighbor entered the room. He was an erect sort of personage, something like the pictures one occasionally sees of a cavalier; a resemblance of which, perhaps, he was proud, as he was said to plead a distant relationship to the Stuarts themselves. At all events, he was an enthusiastic lover of the family; more than equalling our Vicar in his attachment to the first Charles, and far transcending him,

(which, indeed, was a matter of no difficulty,) in his attachment to the second. The old gentleman, who was now ten times more occupied with his cushion than ever, at once broke ground upon his favorite topic, told his visitor all the story,—the substance of what he had read, the exact quantity he had read, and, finally, begged to know if he was disposed to partake, first of some tea, and then of the richer feast prepared for him in the precious memoir. The visitor, as the memoir had reached the precise period which he deemed most worthy of notice, and of which, indeed, he himself, but for an unaccountable habit of bad spelling, had often conceived a wish to write the history,—at once consented. Behold, then, the due preliminaries of bread and butter being settled, the three seated to their interesting employment, and the old gentleman, as happy as a king, I mean as a good king, begin to read.

"I confess that, neither what I saw of the Protector at church, or heard of him from my loquacious friends, the Sexton and Clerk, was calculated to destroy the remem-

brance of my personal indignities, or to conciliate my esteem for the author of them. Cromwell was a person in whom, unhappily, great talents and great vices met together, —a 'bold bad man?'"

"Very just, I am sure," said the visitor, and took off his other glove, which before, as if doubtful about staying, he had kept in his hand.

"I fear it is just," said the charitable Vicar; "but let us hope that he did not mean to be as wicked as he seems. He was, after all, an enthusiast; and, in such men, the head is generally the dupe of the heart." The visitor thought, as many other people will think, the Vicar's charity much misplaced; but he let him read on.

"At length, sir, to my astonishment, I heard, in a whisper from the Reader to the Clerk, that the Protector had suddenly sickened; and, in spite of the prophecies of some pseudo religious quacks about him, had died. And I cannot say but that, if I had thought him better prepared for so awful a change, I should have cordially joined in the general rejoicing. It was for-

cibly said of him, that he was one of those men who, whenever they die, die for the good of their country."

"That," said the Vicar, drily, "must depend on the character of his successor." Here the visitor began to chaff a little; but the old gentleman had so much of what is called *bonhommie* about him, and said his hardest things so very softly, that it was impossible to be really angry with him. He read again.

"I pass over the momentary reign of his son, who, being fitter for a country gentleman than a sovereign, had the good sense to make the discovery, and the honesty to lay down a sceptre, which he had neither right nor ability to wield. And this was a small part of his praise. He lived without reproach or even suspicion from the reigning family; and went down to his grave, at near ninety, rich in all those hopes and joys denied to many kings, and to all usurpers.—Let us pass on, then, at once, to the days of Charles II. And here, sir, I confess, that although I had seen two great national changes, I was not pre-

pared for what followed. The people were naturally very glad to see the King back. But how did they testify their joy? By the most extravagant excesses,—as if they wanted a King merely for the illustrious privilege of breaking every law of God and man. If they had known that particular monarch better, they would have known, that there was only one man in the nation to whom he was disposed to grant this plenary indulgence."

"Who was that?" asked the old lady. Neither the visitor nor the Vicar thought fit to reply,—though, I suspect they had the most opposite answer upon their lips—the latter proceeded to read.

"The court took the lead in profligacy. And the multitude, a month since, to all appearance, a nation of enthusiasts, were suddenly transmuted into a nation of drunkards and profligates. Some of those who had scarcely ceased to cry 'Hosannah!' now cried, 'Crucify Him!' Excessive heat was chased, as it were, and expelled by excessive cold. I can fancy nothing like it."—

"Except," said the Vicar, whom his wife esteemed something of a wag, "a hail storm in the dog days." He then proceeded to read.

"You can scarcely conceive the change in the sermons.—For a long time I had discharged a very inferior office at church. For many of the Commonwealth preachers having a notion that words once impressed upon paper lost all their efficacy,—that what a man conceived in his study, when he had time to pray and read, was necessarily bad,—and what he conceived in the pulpit, where he had time for neither, was necessarily good,—had banished written sermons. So that my only function, during this disastrous period, was to endure the lusty blows of certain ardent, but not very delicate fists; the weight of which, however, I must say, more than compensated for every other subduction of labor. At length, the Restoration brought back written sermons. The character of the new sermons, however, I confess, did not please me. The resolution apparently taken by the Royalists, was first, to do all that the Re-

publicans had left undone; and, secondly, to leave undone all they had done. Now, if no particle of truth had mixed up with their errors, this rule would have been wise. But as their system included a remarkable mixture of truth and error, nothing could be more mischievous."

"It was," said the Vicar, "inflicting upon religion something like the Roman punishment of tying a man to an ape, and casting both together into the Tiber."

The Visitor, whom I shall hereafter call the Cavalier, since he had the look and the mind of one, liked neither the remark nor the smile, both of which he deemed too honorable to Puritanism—and taking the glove again from his pocket, drew it on. Something also he said gruffly and indistinctly; but the Vicar, not liking the tone in which he spoke, thought even his own voice pleasanter than this, and therefore began to read again. "Henceforward, sir, with some honorable exceptions, however, we heard little of Christ, and faith, and conversion; for which words were substituted, Socrates, reason, and moderation; as if

sound doctrines were not the best security for good sense and sobriety. Such, indeed, was for a time the neglect of the fundamental principles of religion, that I am persuaded a good heathen, coming to church, might, except indeed on the festivals, have often concluded himself in his own temple. True doctrine was out of fashion with the nation, and good morals unpalatable to the King."

"What king could that be?" said the old lady, "one of whose little frailties was to ask unlucky questions?"

"I am quite sure," said the Vicar, whose peculiar art it was to evade these questions —"it was not George the Third."

"It must be Louis the XIVth," said the Visitor.

"Perhaps," replied the Vicar, "if we read on, we shall hear." And accordingly he read on.

"I have been much struck, sir, in my long life, with one circumstance, that whenever the monarch of any country was either arbitrary or licentious, and the people began to slide into the immoralities of the

court, the great doctrines of the Gospel became unpopular, and certain features of Popery began to discover themselves in the national religion. And so it was, to a great extent, now. Pomp grew, and devotion languished. Violent assaults were made on the sanctity of the Sabbath. The saints did not indeed again take possession of the vacant niches, nor the Pope come over to be crowned—transubstantiation, and purgatory were also abjured—but what may be called the genius of Popery, I mean—the form without the spirit of religion, presided too often in the pulpit, and at the altar. It was a more subtle Popery—Popery in a mask—Popery like an Italian assassin, doing its work, without showing its face.

"But, sir, I had not much leisure to speculate upon the state of things in the Establishment; for, one Wednesday evening, on which day, after morning prayers, I had always been allowed to be at rest in my box, I found myself suddenly in the gripe of a new rector of the parish, who, casting me, somewhat contemptuously, my stabbed side uppermost, on the vestry table,

(if the old Vicar had won a sword, I am sure he would at this moment have laid his hand upon the hilt of it,) in a loud tone said to the circle of eager vestrymen around him,

"'There, gentlemen, judge for yourselves—is such a cushion worthy of such a Church?' 'Or,' said an upholsterer, who hoped to be called upon to supply a new cushion, 'of such a Clergyman?' 'Surely,' observed a laceman, 'it would do well enough with new lace and tassels.' 'Certainly,' said a dyer, 'if it were only cleaned and dyed.' But, as there chanced to be more than one of a trade in the vestry—as a mere repair would not answer the upholsterer's purpose, nor new lace the dyer's, it was determined to make a grace of necessity, and generously to comply with the Clergyman's wish. My dismissal was accordingly agreed upon, noted and signed in the vestry book, and an order given for another. I accordingly became the perquisite of the pew opener, and will now proceed to tell you what use he made of his new possession."

"If it had been hanged, drawn, and quartered," said the now bursting Visitor, "it was far too happy a fate for it. Is not the memoir downright Puritanism and treason, from beginning to end?"

"If it was, sir," said the Vicar calmly, "it should be cut into thread-papers to-morrow. But, on the contrary, it has personal reasons—see there, sir, pointing to the lacerated side of the cushion, for disliking Puritanism—

> 'Look, in this place, ran Cassius' dagger through,
> See what a rent the envious Casca made.'

"And as for loyalty, why, sir, I hope I may venture to say that I am a loyal man. There hangs a king," pointing to his darling picture, "to save whose head I would willingly, notwithstanding his faults, have laid my own on the block." The old lady absolutely groaned out at the terrible vision her lord had conjured up—"but, I must say, that by somewhat unequal distribution, he seems to have had all the virtue of the family. It was just like the old peach-tree in the garden, my love, which as you well

know, all the sap has run to one branch. Of what, sir, in Charles II.," continued he, can we speak favorably? Of his religion?" "No," said the Visitor, who was at the bottom a conscientious man. "Of his morals?" "No." "Of his politics?" "No." "Of his good old English spirit?" "No." "Well, then, since we can say nothing good of him, we had better," added the kind old gentleman, "say nothing at all. If, sir, I had caught him sleeping in the cave of Makkedah, I would not have rudely touched even the skirt of his garment; but I would have gently jogged his Majesty when thus slumbering over his own interests, and those of his country, and have said to him, 'Sire, the crown of England will be a crown of thorns to any man who wears it without deserving it.' Political compacts vanish away, but the title of a good king is registered in heaven, and stamped on the hearts of his people."

"Perhaps, my love," said the old lady, "if any one had said this to him, he would have been reclaimed."

"Let us hope so," said her lord, "and

just touch for a moment on another topic noticed in the memoir. Did you not notice the hints given there of a revival of Popery?"

"To be sure, and that it always appeared when any other form or system of religion disappeared."

"Like rats," said the Vicar, who, it seems, had got up in a humor for similes, "like rats in an empty house."

"Sir," said the Visitor, who combined an absolute antipathy for Popery with a profound respect for a kind of Protestantism not much unlike it, "I can see nothing like Popery in the religion of the days of Charles the Second."

"Now, for my part," answered the Vicar, "I see something like it in the religion of all days. Popery seems to me the religion of human nature. It is the weed which both springs up wherever the soil is uncultivated, and endeavors to choke whatever is sown. The Pope is a mere man, who endeavors to add temporal to spiritual power, and to get both into his own hands. People have talked of Popes, Wesley, and

Whitfield, and they, with many others, are proofs, perhaps, that you may have Popes without tiaras."

"And what is Popery?" asked the old lady.

"The religion of forms," answered the Vicar, "a sort of pantomime, where much was to be done by dumb show."

"But," asked the visitor, who, knowing the Vicar's strict adherence to the rites of his own Church, and his almost superstitious reverence for it, thought he had here caught him tripping, "do you, then, despise forms?"

"Far from it," replied the Vicar, "I never yet saw, nor expect to see, religion survive their destruction. But, because I cannot walk without my old stick, I do not mistake it for my legs; nor, because I cannot preach without my cushion here, and do, perhaps, think all my sermons somewhat the better for it, do I yet mistake it for a sermon."

"If you had, my love," said his lady, who deemed the bare comparison of the best of sermons to a cushion, little short of

impiety, "you would make a greater mistake than any you ever made in your life." And, as the visitor had not always found the said sermons quite as composing and comfortable as the image would imply, he heartily assented to this declaration.

"Upon the whole," said the Vicar, "I seem, as I said, to see Popery enter whenever the door is not barred by the treble bolt of an humble, practical, devout spirit. I can sometimes see it, as it were, lurking in the broad-brimmed hat of a quaker, in the smooth silk hat of a methodist, in the cant language of some other sectaries; and, finally, to see it sometimes where I would least of all wish to see it, at the font, and the altar of our own truly spiritual Church."

"In what cases?" asked the Visitor.

"When," replied the old gentleman, "the priests or the people imagine that the mere rite supersedes real vital religion in the heart of the worshipper."

"I fear," said the visitor, "I have something of Popery running in my own veins."

"That very fear," said the Vicar, "will, by the divine blessing, carry off the dis-

ease." And then he caught him tenderly by the hand. "Do not think," said he, "that I led intentionally the conversation to this issue; but, as Providence has conducted us to this point, let us make the best use of your circumstances. I do think you have named your chief fault. The correctness of your life, your zeal for the Church, your integrity, your benevolence, have long made me love you, and feel ashamed of myself—and I have often said, but 'One thing lackest thou yet.' Seek, dear sir, to add the spirit to the form of religion—bring fire to your altar—put the soul into the act—and then, I shall be as inferior to you in devotion, as I have long been in every thing else. I am your shepherd, sir, but the sheep often knows his way to the best pastures better than his shepherd. Happy, most happy shall I be, to tread in your steps."

There was something in this honest, simple, pastoral address of the good Vicar, that sunk to the very heart of his visitor. He lifted his handkerchief to his face as if to weep—but, as the old lady at almost the

same moment observed, "how much these wood fires affect the eyes;" and he and the Vicar assented to it—this might possibly be the cause. A few moments afterwards, however, when they were gone out of the room, with eyes full of tears, he exclaimed, "I have drawn nigh to thee with my lips, but my heart was far from thee."

The same gentleman died two years afterwards, and this codicil was found to his will—"I leave to the Vicar of ———, in ———, my Baskett's Bible and Prayer Book, as a testimony of gratitude for his having first taught me to use them both as I ought." The old Vicar keeps them in a choice corner of his library; and his lady, in gentle disobedience to his orders, will, when he is absent, tell the story, and look a little proud of her husband. This, however, the less signifies, as I am quite sure he was not proud of himself.

CHAPTER VII.

The Vicar, however, though not proud of himself was proud of his cushion, and therefore felt too much anxiety to know its history, after its expulsion from the establishment, not to seat himself to his memoir as early as he conscientiously could. Having entered on his task, he read as follows:—

"I confess, sir, such is the love of novelty, and so heartily tired was I of the cold-blooded divines of the days of Charles and James, that I was not very sorry to find the hour of my dismissal arrive. As I traversed the streets under the arms of one of the pew-openers, I indulged in many flattering visions as to my future life. Who could say—Cromwell had risen to the throne, and why should not I become the cushion of the Crown itself—get into parliament, or carry the mace of the speaker—or, if unable to reach those honors with which I am acquainted, attain to some unknown digni-

ties? No one, I believe, expects to be injured by a change of circumstances. But, sir, imagine my horror, in the midst of these fairy dreams, to be plumped down on the counter of the shop, adorned without by the sign of the three golden balls, and which I soon found to be the shop of a pawnbroker. He received me, most carefully examined me, and having scrupulously pointed out those blemishes with which, alas! the vender was too familiar, bought me for ten shillings. Then, having affixed to me a ticket, marked one pound, and so situated as exactly to conceal the mutilated part, he exalted me, among many other pieces of reduced finery, to the windows. Here, although my ancient splendor was somewhat in eclipse, enough remained to attract the eye of many a passenger. Multitudes eyed, felt, and measured me, but all thought me too dear. But for this circumstance, I was once on the brink of being translated to a Jewish synagogue. Once, had I been an inch larger, the dowager of a baronet would have bought me for a lap-dog. Once, the manager of a country theatre coveted me,

for these gentlemen are apt to think little of breaking a commandment, for the council scene in Cato. At length an elder of a dissenting congregation, having been dedicated by his brethren to the important office of introducing a cushion into a pulpit, hitherto unpolluted by such velvet vanities, took courage, put me into a hackney coach, and laid me in triumph, once more upon a vestry table.

"I soon found where I was. Indeed, the days of the Protector had both given me some acquaintance with my new friends, and left me, notwithstanding the real worth, piety, and talents of very many of them, without any partiality for their system. However, as it is the duty of cushions as well as men to be contented, I endeavored to reconcile myself to my new situation. But, indeed, sir, this was not easy. For to past were added new injuries. That irreverence for cushions, of which I carried such evidence on my mutilated side, was scarcely less felt in these days than in those of the Puritans. As I once said that even the cushion of a Catholic church was venerable

in his eyes, so, if you can believe me, it seemed almost a matter of indifference to some of my new proprietors, whether I was trampled or preached upon."

"My dear," said the Vicar, quickened to the remark, perhaps, by his almost superstitious reverence for the cushion itself, "I venture to say this was wrong. Those who insult, or even neglect the forms of religion, are in imminent peril of learning to despise religion itself. A man who laughed at my surplice, would soon laugh at me." The old lady, as the surplice happened to be the work of her own hands, was marvellously sensible of the force of this illustration, and almost wondered that a world should survive in which men were found to laugh at either. The old gentleman proceeded to read—"when I arrived, sir, the elders of the Congregation happened to be assembled to sit in judgment upon the character of their minister, against whom I found capital misdemeanors were alleged. He was charged with preaching a written sermon—with wishing for a service on Christmas day—with prefacing a sermon with the Lord's

Prayer—with suggesting the propriety of kneeling in prayer. From the tone of authority assumed by the judges, I soon discovered that they, and not he, were the real ministers of the chapel. He was a sort of organ, of which they were to change the barrel, fill the pipes and manage the keys at their pleasure."

"So greatly are both the spirit and the taste of the dissenters improved in our days," said the Vicar, "that such innovations, would now be applauded by many, and perhaps forgiven by all. But this interference with their ministers is inseparable from their system; and in my mind constitutes a great objection to it. I hope I am not proud, my love." "I am *sure* you are not," said she—"But," continued he, "I should almost as soon lay down my office as my independence. I now mount my pulpit as an ambassador from heaven to earth—have no reason for fear, and no temptation to flatter. I strike at the vices of my parish, and strike the harder as I know them to be the more prevalent. As far as I can see, this dissenting minister was meant for

a more independent church. But let us read on."

"After a sitting of a few hours, the conclave rose; but not till, after much warm discussion, a resolution had been passed to dismiss the minister."

"Like children," said the Vicar, "throwing their physic out of window."

Here he proceeded to read, "I supposed the matter would have ended; but I then knew little of the facility of separation when the habit is once formed. The keystone of unity once removed, the building shivers at a mere touch. The very next day the minority determined to secede with their ejected minister; and, within six months, a new chapel frowned upon the old one from the opposite side of the street, and before the plaister was yet dry, the rheumatic congregation listened to the history of their neighbor's intolerance."

"My love," said the generous Vicar, "this must be a little highly colored. Our friend here, you must remember, is very high church. At least, whatever may be the tendency of dissent, that is not, I should

imagine, its general history. But let us go on."

"I, as you may suppose, sir, continued with the old congregation, the new one not being ripe for any such extravagancies. Nor, indeed, was I any great favorite here. I did hear it whispered, that I should never have been introduced but for an ill-tempered remark, made upon the chief member of the congregation, as he rolled past in a remarkably well cushioned carriage, about the 'ark of God dwelling in tents.' Here, however, I was placed; and to show you what use I made of my circumstances, I will give you a very slight sketch of our congregation and ministers during the time I stayed.

"I found that the Chapel had been erected at a period when the clergyman of the parish happened to love sporting far better than preaching. The people, who, however wanting in religion themselves, quickly perceive any deficiency in their clergy, soon quitted the church. And as the dissenting minister preached orthodox doctrines in a spiritual and zealous manner; as, moreover,

for a time, the service was accommodated to their taste, by the introduction of a large proportion of the Church prayers—the wandering flock sought food in these new pastures. And, in the first instance, much general good appeared to arise from the exchange. Many of the ignorant were taught, many of the profligate reclaimed—and many of the miserable comforted. During this period, the mass of the congregation were poor. Soon, however, some of the poor becoming rich, obtained an ascendancy in the congregation, and finding some an orthodox, and others a practical religion, troublesome to them—ejected, first one minister, and then another, as contending parties prevailed; oscillating for a long time between an Antinomian and a Socinian. For a long time the struggle was doubtful; but, at length, as the weight of influence lay on the side of the Socinians, heterodoxy prevailed. One consequence of this was, that the piety and morals of the pulpit both declined. The next was, that the congregation declined as fast as the doctrines. Socinianism thinned it like the plague. And at last, except

that I, and an old man and woman, who were stone deaf, remained, the words, 'My brethren,' were absolutely superfluous."

"My love," said the Vicar,—"this fact is worth a thousand arguments.—The 'common people heard (Christ) gladly.' Socinianism never fails to drive them away. A religion without a Saviour is the temple without the Shechinah, and its worshippers will all desert it. Few men in the world have less pretensions as a preacher than myself—my voice, my look, my manner, all—"

"All excellent," said she.—"All of a very ordinary nature," said he, "and yet, I thank God, there is scarcely a corner of our little church where you might not find a streaming eye, or a beating heart. The reason is—that I speak of Christ; and, if there is not a charm in the word, there is the train of fears, and hopes, and joys, which it carries along with it. The people feel, and then they must listen."

The old lady, though she widely differed from the Vicar as to his notion of his own voice and manner, quite sympathized with him in all his enthusiasm, upon the glori-

ous theme on which he had now entered. An humbler spirit scarcely ever breathed. This humility had carried her to the foot of the cross of Christ, and she seemed to stand there like one of the women who had followed him to his crucifixion. I have seen her hang upon her husband's lips, when he dwelt upon this topic, as if she was listening to the song of the angels—"to you is born this day, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In church it was their darling theme—at home, their continual feast. The sacred name of a Saviour never failed to quell a rising difference, to bind up a wound, to dry up a tear, to shed a sort of sunshine over all their prospects. I shall never forget the emphasis with which she replied to his last sentence—"Yes, my dear, *they* feel, and *I* feel, and if we did not all feel, the stones themselves would cry out. If my feelings ever languish, I call to mind our poor Catholic, who, as you well remember, when her priest had prescribed some penance for her sins, after hearing you, burst into the vestry, crying, '*that* is the Saviour I want.' We all want him, and

God be praised, we may all possess him." The old man's heart burned within him as she talked, and he now felt, what indeed he had felt a thousand times, *why* he loved his wife.

"But," said he, "to return to the memoir—what a striking history of dissent we have here. In two or three generations, you see the orthodoxy of this chapel freezing into Socinianism. And this particular history would, I apprehend, serve for the history of some other chapels. Socinianism or Arianism now, it is to be feared, fills some of the pulpits once occupied by the Howes, Owens, or Baxters of other days. Could these holy men, and others of their company, return to earth, they would find their lamps burning, not always around those shrines where their hands had suspended them, but in the despised and deserted aisles of the establishment. The fastidious and innovating spirit of some of their followers soon spent itself. The fire burnt out, and often left behind it nothing but the ashes of infidelity. And the want of a fixed creed and articles renders any re-

covery of their original zeal and principles very difficult. Rarely do we hear of their dead in faith walking again. In our Church, on the contrary, and, in great part, by the influence of her formularies, the dead do walk. Within a century, religion has, as it were, sprung up from the grave in which she was partially entombed at the Restoration, and from whence many admirable men had long been endeavoring to raise her, and walks abroad in many of the cathedrals, churches, and colleges of the land. But, my dear, I am talking myself, when I had much better be reading the memoir." And so he took up the manuscript again, and read as follows:

"When I said, sir, that religion flourished for a time in the congregation, I did not mean to say, that the religion, either in kind or in form, was quite to my taste—and you shall know why. In the first place, I seemed to perceive a want of solemnity in it. It had as much the air of a transaction between man and man, as between man and his God. A sort of unholy familiarity

with divine things prevailed. Here many an Uzzah laid his hand upon the ark."

"And," said the Vicar, "if the men did not 'die' for this unhallowed rashness, yet the system suffered for it. I believe nothing has injured the cause of dissent more."

"Besides this," he proceeded to read, "there was a want of majesty in the exterior worship of God, the church was too like a house. A kind of levelling spirit ran through every thing, which denied even the King of kings, the trappings of his throne, or the curtains of his sanctuary.

"Then, again, there was a want of care to lend religion those human helps which are of such importance to her cause, especially in a civilized country. Some seemed to think that mere piety superseded every other quality in a minister; and, thus, those were often employed to preach the Gospel who could scarcely read it."

"Like Jeroboam," said the Vicar, "who took of the lowest of the people, and made them priests of the Lord."

"Unlike the spirit of the true religion," said his lady, "which required the Jews to

exclude every thing blemished from the altar." The old gentleman had half a dozen more similies ready, but thought it best to read on.

"They used, indeed, to justify this practice by a reference to the first teachers of the Gospel. "These were fishermen," they said, but then they forget they were inspired fishermen—fishermen endowed by miracle with considerable acquaintance with many languages, and an accurate knowledge of their own.—But, sir, even these were not the worst defects. One capital blot in their public worship, a blot, I trust, no longer to be found, was that, in some instances at least, they neglected to read the Scriptures.—Another great error was, their too low estimate of prayer. They threw away your noble form of prayer, that the minister might pray as he pleased. The consequence was, that the people also heard as they pleased, which was often not at all. The minister prayed, and they looked about them. Prayer with them was a secondary object—the sermon, all in all.

"As if," said the Vicar, "God had

said,—' My house shall be called a house of preaching,' instead of ' a house of prayer.' "

"Perhaps," said the old lady, "no one has had stronger temptations than myself to prefer the preaching to the prayers; and yet, my dear, I can truly say, that—take away the liturgy, the solemn moments of intercourse with Heaven, the swell of united voices, and the concord of united hearts in prayer to God—take these away, and that bell which now so cheers my heart every Sunday morning, would lose half its charms for me."

"True, my love,—all true," said the Vicar, "with the exception of your praise of me,—take away the spirit of prayer, and, though the materials or even the splendor of the temple remain, 'the glory,' has 'departed' from it. And the tendency of a liturgy is to preserve this spirit. It is chiefly on this account I love the Church. It is on this account I believe the Ark of God to be safer in her hands than in any other. And such is my conviction of her superiority, that when I hear of the exultation of some good, though I humbly think,

mistaken men, in the prospect of erecting dissent upon the ruins of the Establishment, I always think of the spectators of the Second Jewish temple—the 'people, indeed, the thoughtless and blind populace, shouted for joy; but those who remembered the first temple—wept.'"

"Such a change is too painful even to think of," said the old lady, "and so, my dear, suppose you read on."

He did.—"I told you, sir, that I was much given to reflection; and having had more leisure than most for indulging this propensity, I have found out more reasons for preferring an establishment, than are generally noticed. Two of these, I will mention. In the first place, then, one great maxim of the Dissenters is, 'that every man must have entire liberty to worship God as he pleases.' Now, sir, no dissenter is willing to give to every man that plenary indulgence. Nor is it possible. Would he give it to an Atheist, who assisted in teaching his principles upon Westminster Bridge, or to any of those impostors who have called themselves Jesus Christ, and insisted upon

divine honors being paid them?—another favorite maxim of theirs is, 'that no man should be made to pay for religious instruction *before* he himself desires to have it.' This scheme seems to me to forget the corruption of human nature—for how few would pay for instruction, who were able to avoid paying. The Establishment, on the contrary, remembers that man is fallen, forces him to provide the means, and trusts that the conversion may follow."

Here the old Vicar put down his paper to think of these arguments. What his lady did, in the mean time, it is impossible to say. All I know is, that, about half an hour after the time he may be supposed to have read this period, both were discovered by John, who, with some suspicion of the fact, looked gently in at the door, in a profound sleep. So he left them; and, as there is a break in the manuscript at this point, so will we leave them. Indeed, I do not know why any one should wish to disturb them. It was their high, though rare privilege, never to fall asleep without a well-founded hope that if they never rose again in this

world, they should awake in another and a happier. Surely, if many had such a hope, we should have more good sleepers in the world. And I firmly believe, that every other prescription to insure good sleep is useless, till this is taken.

CHAPTER VIII.

How long the Vicar suffered under this infirmity of his nature, I am unable to say. The next morning he rose as he always did, very early, and long before his lady approved of his rising. Not but she loved "the sweet hour of prime" herself—but she saw evidently that the good old man daily grew older; and she could not help thinking that more sleep would be good for him. But I believe she was mistaken.—The pure air—the undisturbed possession of God and nature—the quiet bracing of his mind for his daily duties—the order and leisure which early rising secured to him for the day to come, were still better for him. And, sometimes, when on joining him before breakfast in his study, she saw his face, like that of Moses after his descent from the mount, and his high converse with God, glistening with inward peace and joy—with the comfortable sense of the divine presence—she

thought so too.—But, to return.—After a day spent, as upon a dying bed, we shall wish to have spent every day—he sat down again, with a glad heart, to his manuscript.

"And now sir," he continued to read, "I come to an event in my life, which is not the least interesting to me, as it led to my connexion with yourself." The old gentleman involuntarily bowed his head, and read on.—"Such is the change in human things, that I, who had a few years since been esteemed too splendid for the pulpit of dissent, was now deemed too shabby. The congregation, as I said, had decayed in piety—but it had increased in wealth. Indeed, this very increase was partly the cause of this very decay. Dissent, like every other republic, is less likely to remain pure when it begins to be wealthy! Its purity depends upon its alienation from the world, with which riches have a tendency to incorporate it. So happened it now. The increased riches of the congregation lured it into the vortex of ecclesiastical splendor—and the first thing cast overboard was my poor self. It was decided, in vestry, unanimously,

with the exception at least of a single primitive old gentleman, who most pathetically pleaded the distresses of some poor widows in the congregation—that the 'old cushion,' as they were pleased to call me, should be discarded, and a new one, becoming the dignity of the congregation, be substituted in my place."

"Old ! ! !" said the Vicar, "one of the virtues of Sparta was a reverence for age. And I never heard of a commonwealth, great or small, which flourished without it. For my part, it is the very age of my cushion which I honor. I never touch it without fancying I lay my hand where Latimer or Ridley have laid theirs. I like nothing new in religion—new translations, new doctrines, new systems. It is not a *tera incognita*, in which any new discoveries are to be made." What this speech of the Vicar had to do with the cushion, it is difficult to say ; but these wanderings may be excused in a good old man accustomed to short texts and long sermons. He soon returned to his manuscript.

'I confess, sir, that I heard of my dis-

missal without regret. My early habits indisposed me to dissent. I felt much tenderness, indeed, for the scrupulous dissenter, much admiration of the general zeal, and a hearty desire to co-operate with them for every good end. But I saw nothing which led me to think that, on the whole, the stones of the church, would be better employed in building meetings. The Dissenters are often important auxiliaries to the church,—but they would, in my mind, be bad substitutes for it.—But I proceed. The changes in my circumstances were many and great. I passed through a variety of places of worship. At length, I fell from public into private life. And I shall beg to describe to you a few persons whose private devotions it was my lot to assist.

"Vetusta was the first. She was an aged lady, who, to the surprise of a good many gay friends, had lately possessed herself of some devout books, and of myself, and had, moreover, taken down some dubious pictures of nymphs and satyrs in her dressing-room, to fit it up as an oratory.—Few people have run a more various course

than Vetusta. She was a woman of unusually strong passions, for which, in her earliest years, she found a sufficient employment in a life of ceaseless dissipation. When what is called pleasure ceased to stimulate, she gave herself to books. When books also had lost their influence, she found a vacuum which she hoped religion might fill up. And, accordingly, by another roll of the wheel, she took up religion. Sensation was what she wanted—and pleasure, books, devotion, were the successive substances out of which it was to be extracted. All were used much in the same spirit, and it is not harsh to say, that she was just as much a Christian on her knees at sixty, as at her toilet thirty years before. Admitted to her privacies, I narrowly watched this stimulating process. She read, talked, prayed, all that she might feel; and, so that she felt, cared little for the effect of her devotions upon her life and temper."

"Such a religion," said the Vicar, "is little better than dram-drinking. It is more decent, perhaps, but not less noxious. But, my dear," he added, "I would not be

harsh. I fear the religion of many an old man is of the same complexion with that of Vetusta. We give ourselves to God, when nothing else will have use; and think ourselves in search of him when, in fact, we are only in quest of our early sensations. The question is, whether, if I were young, I should be willing to give the morning of life, the season of enjoyment, to God?"

"You forget, my love," said his lady, "that you did love and serve God in your youth."

"I thank God," replied the Vicar, "that, after my humble manner, I in some measure did; but so much have I learned to suspect my own heart, that I can scarcely believe stronger temptations to have been, at any earlier period, conquered by one so ill able to encounter the weakest, even now."—He proceeded to read.—

"When Vetusta died, I lay beside her, supporting the last book of devotion with which a poor niece who stood by had fruitlessly endeavored to shed a ray of heavenly comfort upon the cheerless death-bed of her aunt. Vetusta, though she had ceased to

love any thing here, felt nothing but a chilly horror of an hereafter.

"The care which had, as it were, borne her affections from the earth, had not, like that of the prophet, translated them to heaven. She hung in suspense between two worlds, tired of the one and unfit for the other. Such a death-bed shut out all the hopes which light up the dying eyes of a real Christian. Her niece no sooner saw the last breath quivering on her lips, than, shuddering at the awful scene, she almost unconsciously snatched me up, and the volume lying upon me, carried me to her chamber, locked the door, and then poured forth such a prayer to God as grief, the yawning chasm of the grave, the awful visions of eternity of which she had just caught a glimpse, were calculated to inspire. I became her property, lay in her closet, and saw and heard her in all her future moments of intercourse with God and with herself; and from her peculiar character and circumstances, soon felt a singular interest in her fate. The lesson taught by her little history is so useful, that it ought

to be told to almost every parent but yourself, who have no need to learn it. And you, sir, so love the young, that you will rejoice to see a beacon lighted up for other parents, though it may be useless to yourself. I shall, therefore, perform this important office.

"The name, then, of my new protectress was Selina; and a gentler spirit was scarcely ever let loose amidst the snares and tumults of the world. She had been taken from her parents by her aunt four years before I saw her. They were persons of the cast which would be called amiable—but amiable rather, from easiness of temper, than from strength of principle. They had, indeed, little or no religion; and her father especially, a man of almost morbid delicacy, on account of some indefensible conduct in a neighbor professing to be religious, had contracted a strong antipathy to it. Their very narrow circumstances, and his infirm health, had induced them to resign her to her aunt; and both parents and child felt a real pang in the separation. They loved her as an amiable child deserved to be lov-

ed ; and she loved them too well to observe any of their numerous defects."

"Once introduced into her aunt's family, she soon perceived a great change in the appearance of things. The apparatus of religion surrounded her on every side. The devotions of the family were many and long, and her aunt, having found a new stimulus in the work of converting her niece, gave herself cordially to it, bridled her temper, and strongly and eloquently pleaded the cause of religion. The mind of Selina was soon awed by the warnings of her gloomy monitress. She began to discover that, at least, the 'terrors of the law' had been veiled at home—that she herself had been standing, perhaps, on the verge of perdition, without knowing it, and, adopting by degrees the creed and habits of her teacher, she fell into the formal, superstitious observance of such rites as her aunt prescribed. Far, indeed, was the religion she embraced from that of the gospel—it was, in fact, the law without the gospel—it was religion in eclipse—the dark without the illuminated part of the heavenly disc. Ter-

ror was her prevalent feeling. She saw God alone as he sits pavilioned in clouds, rolling the thunders, and flashing the lightnings of Mount Sinai; but not as he descends, shorn of his beams, and with healing in his wings, upon the holy hill of Zion. This view of God naturally darkened all her prospects, and converted her religion into a sort of desponding effort to sooth, by her future life, the wrath of this despotic and vindictive Being. The character of the house corresponded with this state of mind. Her aunt, in order to rouse her own feelings, surrounded herself with all those symbols of religion which were best calculated to awaken her exhausted sensibilities; and these, however lost upon herself, produced their full effect upon her niece. She became fitter for La Trappe, than for the holy, happy life of a Christian."

The old Vicar here laid down the manuscript. "My dear," said he, "I almost shudder while I read this history. Is not God our Father, and shall we exhibit him to our children and tremble before him ourselves as a mere tyrant? Shall not the hap-

py face of nature—her scented flowers, her painted fruits, her golden harvests, yon 'brave o'erhanging firmament,' the shining lamps of heaven, the 'moon walking in brightness,'—shall not this blessed book," and he once more emphatically laid his hand upon it, "shall not, above all, the death of his dear Son for a lost world, teach us that, 'God is love,'—that not mere awe, but awe tempered, and softened by love, is to be felt for him who thus 'first loved us?' Among the many causes which attach me to the services of our own Church, this has always been one—its freedom from gloom and sternness—its mild, cheerful, amiable, paternal spirit. "Our dear child," he added, after a pause, and the tears rolled down his aged cheeks as he spoke, "is I doubt not, gone to heaven, and if I were called upon to name the means which most, under the divine blessing, contributed to his early ripeness for it, I should say it was his mother's anxious care, as he walked by the way, at his lying down, and at his rising up, to set before him the image of God as a tender and compassionate Father. At

least, my love, the curse is not upon you of giving him dishonorable views of God—of showing him, not the illumined side of the pillar of the divine presence, but that cloudy side from behind which God frowned upon his impious foes."

The old gentleman had touched a tender chord. It was their only child of whom he had been speaking. He had come up, and was cut down like a flower. And though they had long ceased to mourn over him, and felt, at their age, that the line of separation was dwindling to nothing, yet, whenever they spoke of him, they could speak of nothing else. They would sit together and search their memories, and perhaps their imagination, for materials to build up a sort of little parental monument to his early charms and virtues. Thus they spent almost an hour now, and then, having consigned themselves in prayer to that heavenly Father, to whom their boy was gone, I need not say they slept in peace.

CHAPTER IX.

The Vicar and his lady, however, were too much interested in the history of Selina, to lose the first opportunity of returning to it. And we therefore will return with them.

"Selina was deeply affected at the death of her aunt: not, indeed, because she loved her, for that was next to impossible; but the scenes of death passing before an already disordered eye, had scared her with the most terrible visions. Nor had the dying language of her aunt yielded her spirits the smallest relief. She had died, and, as it were, 'made no sign' of her hopes of any better and brighter state of being. Selina, as she hung over her corpse, had seen, indeed, the ashes of the dead, but could not discover among them that bright spark of hope and joy which is to blaze anew in the kingdom of God. The state, therefore, in

which she was left, was truly melancholy. She was not religious—she was superstitious. She felt herself guilty, but had never been taught to lift her eyes to the cross of a Saviour. She felt herself weak, but no one had led her to the 'Comforter,'—to that 'Spirit' who dries up the tears of the miserable. In these sad circumstances she tried various means of approaching her God. She shed many bitter tears—she denied herself even those allowed indulgences which a gracious God has so profusely spread around us—she ran through a daily circle of unmeaning ceremonies. But, in all this, her poor wounded conscience found no consolation; for man is not meant to be his own Saviour. It might have been hoped, indeed, that she would have found her cure amidst the pages of the Bible, which she daily read, but this she had learned to pervert, so as to suit her own gloomy views. She pointed all its terrors at herself, and gave all its promises to others. Soon the evil spread, like a cloud, over every thing she saw. All around her began to invest itself with new terrors. She fancied a sword

across every path, and a hand-writing upon every wall.

"Her sad circumstances were, of course, soon made known to her parents; and, though their tenderness protracted her fall, they, ignorant of religion themselves, were unable to supply the proper pillar for her sinking mind. A consumption followed, and I saw her, at nineteen, carried out to her grave, the unripe victim of a neglected education, and a spurious faith."

Here the old Vicar gave a deep groan. His lady sobbed. "And thus," she exclaimed, "was a 'lamb' of the 'great Shepherd,' whom he would have 'carried in his bosom,' left to perish on the cold and naked rocks. Oh, that you had found her, my love. She would have been to us a daughter. Cruel, indeed, to show her only the fence of the pastures, and not the 'still waters of comfort' within them—to teach her this *half religion*."

"*Half*," said the Vicar, "nothing but your gentleness could give it so mild a name—a superstitious fear of God is no part of religion—It dishonors God—It strips

him of the attribute mercy, and so strikes out the brightest jewel of his crown."

"True," said the old lady, "and yet I dare say, that the wretchedness and death of this poor young creature were charged altogether upon religion."

"Upon that very religion," replied the Vicar, "which alone could have bound up her wounds, wounds inflicted by the irreligion of her parents, and the superstition of her aunt. Religion has no misery to answer for. It is true, that its stupendous truths, rashly flashed upon the already disordered imagination, may, like the light of the sun, poured in rashly upon the diseased eye, overpower it. But men would not quench the sun, because some organs are too weak to bear its lustre—nor must religion be extinguished, because its sublimities may perchance overwhelm a diseased mind. Rather let us endeavor to elevate the mind to religion, than to prostrate religion to the mind. At the same time, tenderness is due to the infirm. And our Lord himself felt and displayed it. What painter who has sketched a portrait of Christ,

ever thought of arming him with thunders? No—love was his weapon; and I feel sure, that this is the weapon his ministers should chiefly employ. Chaucer's picture of a Clergyman, and the image by which he illustrates it, delight me—

> 'He preached the Gospel rather than the Law,
> And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw,—
> ———Thunder and lightning, Heaven's artillery,
> As harbingers before th' Almighty fly.
> These but proclaim his style and disappear—
> The *stiller voice* succeeds, and *God is there*.'"

Now it happened that this picture and this image equally delighted the old lady; and for this especial reason, that she always said it was as like her husband, as though he had sat for it. So, as both were too much exhausted to read more, he sat thinking of the picture, and wishing to be like it—and she, thinking of her husband, and wishing to be like him—till it was more than time to go to bed.

CHAPTER X.

When the good Vicar next resumed his task, he read as follows:

"As the death of the poor girl was altogether charged upon religion, and as I was considered both as a cause and memorial of her fate, neither religion nor I were likely to be in good repute in the house. Her father and mother, indeed, seemed to view me, passive as I was in the business, with a sort of horror, and she in particular, I remember, having one day opened the door and discovered me on the table, seemed to shudder—hastily shut the door again, and hurried away. In these circumstances, it was long doubtful what would become of me; whether the cat or the lap-dog should permanently lay their head on the cushion of vicars and prelates. At last, an old housekeeper, who had always discovered much pity for the young lady, much horror of her aunt, and who, though tremendously

cross, never failed to hobble off twice in the week to a place of worship in the neighborhood, deeming her own pretensions at least equal to those of her four-footed competitors, carried me up to her own little room. I do not know that I should have thought it worth while to dwell on this part of my history, but for two reasons—that my present proprietor was so singular a contrast to my last—and that the faults of both served to convince me of a truth which many wise folks never learn at all—that the widest extreme to wrong is not always right."

"*Always!*" said the Vicar—"the truth seems to be, that it is *never* right. The opposite to profuseness, is avarice—to tyranny, is anarchy—to bigotry, is enthusiasm. Almost all reformers in Church and State, except, indeed, those of my own dear Church and country, appear to me to split on this very rock. It was the moral, I doubt not, taught by the old story of Scylla and Charybdis. Men are apt to tell the story—and forget the moral. Good old England has through God's blessing, remembered both; and accordingly, we have

a Protestant Church, and a free State, with which a wise Papist, or a sober tyrant finds it almost impossible to quarrel. For my part, though I have no fondness for Popery, I honor the little harmless relicts of it, which I see in our Church, as so many monuments of the moderation of my forefathers.—But, let us go on,—I dare say, our friend here meant the same thing."

"I dare say he did," said the old lady.

Thus firmly agreed, as they were sure to be in all charitable conjectures, they proceeded.

"The old housekeeper, though she called herself a Calvinist, was in fact an Antinomian. Independent of her opinions about predestination, and the rest of the five points, she really believed that the moral law of God had little or no force for an advanced Christian. Consequently, her rule was to live as she pleased, and to believe as a favorite minister taught her. I ought to say, that this minister was in general disowned by his brethren, who, whether Calvinists or Arminians, concurred to condemn Antinomianism. I learned this fact from

frequent conferences held in my presence, by the members of the society, on the persecutions they were called to endure. But you shall hear some particulars of the old lady's creed and practice.

"Her religious errors seemed to me chiefly to spring from two causes—one without, and one within—one, the cold and unamiable religion of her mistress, which drove her to an opposite extreme—and the other, an unrestrained temper. Her history is, I believe, by no means peculiar. She had always been remarked as a woman of an irritable temperament, repairing by the embraces of one moment, the petulance of another; perpetually changing her friends and her pursuits. At length, some sermon alarmed her conscience. Immediately, and almost without an effort, she shifted from the side of the world to that of religion. Those wondered at the change, who did not remember that many change their party without changing their tempers; and indeed quit their present sphere only to seek in another, a more unbridled indulgence of these very tempers. Thus was it with the

old lady. In her new character she contrived to lend many of her most offensive qualities a new grace ; and to baptize them with a new name. Her petulance gained, with herself, and a few foolish persons, the very honorable title of zeal—her restlessness, of activity—her changeableness, of independence. Nor did she at a single plunge sink into the depths in which I found her. Her descent, however, was rapid—because she was, in fact, following nature, when she thought she was following God. The benefit which might have been expected from some honest preachers whom she had occasionally heard, was entirely forfeited by one practice—namely, that of leaving every preacher the instant he condemned any cherished indulgence. Thus she had gone through the whole circle of popular ministers ; and, finally, had come to a conclusion, that her present minister was nearly the last prophet, and she herself, nearly the only Christian in the country. Her self-delusion was indeed almost incredible. She would start up furiously from the fourteenth chapter of St. John, to

thunder at a housemaid; and conclude a lecture upon charity by the abuse of one half of her acquaintance."

"Worse and worse," said the Vicar, as he finished the tale—"was ever cushion so unfortunate? I suppose it might have passed through nine-tenths of the congregations in the country, and not have found ten such cases."

"Are you sure of that?" asked his lady.

"I am sure, my love, of nothing," replied he, "but I cannot understand how any ten people, should go mad precisely on the same point; and I can call her state nothing short of insanity."

"But," said she, "I have heard Calvinism charged with necessarily leading to enormities of this kind."

"Then your reporters, my dear," said he, "were not to be trusted. You know that I am no Calvinist—that I agree with Calvin perhaps in scarcely a single point in which he disagrees with Arminius. My testimony, therefore, in vindication of Calvinism may be heard. To say, then, that it necessarily, or even generally, leads to

Antinomianism, is as unjust as to charge the Church with all the robberies and murders of those who profess her communion. Hooker, Usher, Hall, Leighton, and many of the fathers of the Reformation, were Calvinists; and yet, who ever thought of charging them with Antinomianism? But that very high Calvinism easily admits of, and not unfrequently suffers such a perversion —appears to me true; and, in my mind, constitutes a no small objection to that system."

"I have often," said his lady, "since we spoke on the subject, thought of asking your opinion more fully of Cromwell, and especially of his conversation with his Chaplain on his dying bed."

"Cromwell," said the Vicar, "asked, if I remember right, 'whether a man who had been once in a state of grace, could fall away?' And, upon his Chaplain answering 'No—' 'Then,' said he, 'I am safe, for I am sure that I once was in a state of grace.' Now, to say nothing of this 'no,' of the Chaplain, "continued the Vicar, "for which I might possibly have felt disposed

to substitute another monosyllable—if this was the whole of the conversation, I may venture to add, that every wise Calvinist will allow the chaplain to be criminal, and the Protector deluded. Even admitting the truth of the doctrine, Cromwell was plainly deluded in his judgment of his own state, and the chaplain is plainly criminal in suffering him to die in that delusion."

"A pious and moderate Calvinist," said the old lady, who had been reading that very morning, a chapter in Archbishop Leighton, (the most formidable of all controversialists, because every devout reader must be afraid to disagree with him,) "finds much both in Scripture and in reason to say for his system."

"He does, indeed," said the charitable old man; "he finds so much that I am never astonished or angry with those who come to a precisely opposite conclusion on these points to my own. As to scripture, however, it should be remembered, that if some single passages seem to favor that system, the general spirit of the Bible appears to fa-

vor a less exclusive and partial creed. The delineations of God as a *universal Father*—the universal promises, invitations, exhortations to *all*, to awake, to arise, to turn, to pray, seem to me to belong to a more comprehensive scheme. It is not easy to believe, that the gracious God of the Scriptures meant all this for only a small portion of his creatures."

"The doctrine of *election* has, I think, one merit," said the old lady; "it must teach those who believe themselves to be thus elected, to love and honor God."

"But," answered the Vicar, "how will it affect all the rest of mankind? And surely, I am not likely to love and honor God the less because I believe that he makes to all the offers which others believe he makes only to a few?"

"But," she continued, "there appears to be much comfort in their other tenet of *final perseverance*—in feeling that 'God will never forsake his true servants.'"

"There is, indeed," said the Vicar: "but, thank God, I, who am no Calvinist, believe as firmly as they can do, that 'God

never forsakes his *true* servants.' The Calvinist cannot be more sure than another that he is, at the present moment, a true Christian; and, if not sure, his creed is no peculiar comfort to him. And, if sure even of our sincerity in religion, who has reason, upon a system most opposite to Calvinism, to fear that he shall be forsaken? Why should that sun of mercy now forsake us which, amidst all the storms, and crimes, and follies of life, has never yet gone down? My love, I have been young, and now am old; and, from infancy to the verge of second infancy on which I stand, such has been the wholly unmerited compassion of my God, so often has he stretched out to me the golden sceptre of his mercy—so often, when guilty, pardoned—when infirm, strengthened—and when miserable, shed around me the sunshine of his presence, that I am sure he would not I should perish,—and that he who has been the 'hope of my youth,' will 'not forsake me, now that I am old and gray-headed.' I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that as long as I endeavor, by his help, to

stretch out this 'withered arm' for mercy," and as he spoke, he stretched out an arm indeed, withered in the service of the sanctuary,—"as long as I endeavor, in complete distrust of myself, to take hold even of the hem of his garment, I shall find 'virtue go out of him' to heal all my infirmities, and cleanse all my sins. This is my confidence, and if others have more, I thank God for their happiness, but I am content with my own."

Now, such was the humility of the good old man, that he had never been heard to speak as triumphantly of his own hopes before. And, even now, he seemed to blush for an avowal which, not self-complacency, but love and gratitude to God had forced from him. After a short pause, he added, —"I wish, my love, in general, to speak neither of myself nor of the disputable points in religion. As to myself, I am sure of but one thing—that I am a most unworthy servant of a God, to whose mercy, from beginning to end, I must own my salvation. And, as to Calvinists and Arminians—as there are only five points on which they

differ, and at least five hundred on which, if real Christians, they agree, I desire to embrace all the articles of our common faith, and leave the rest to be settled in heaven."

"Perhaps you think," said she, "that they will never be settled on earth."

"I do," answered the Vicar. "Under various shapes they have perplexed the philosophers and divines of all ages. My own creed is this—if a Calvinist so hold his opinion as to lead a holy life, and an Arminian so hold his as to preserve an humble spirit, I believe the principles of neither will exclude them from heaven."

After this, the Vicar, who knew that no position was so safe for a man of his own sentiments as prostration before God, knelt down, and like the giant refreshing himself by touching on his mother earth, recruited, I doubt not, all his hopes, and views, and joys, by intercourse and communion with his God.

CHAPTER XI.

The Vicar and his lady were not long before they returned to the manuscript, and read as follows:

"I will not detain you, sir, over the next stages in my history, nor even with describing to you the exact circumstances by which, when the Methodists started up in the middle of the eighteenth century, I found my way to one of their earliest pulpits. But, of what I saw and heard on this new and somewhat giddy eminence, you will expect me to say something. For a time, then, I own that I was, on the whole, surprised and gratified. You well know, sir, my love for the Reformers. How, then, was I pleased to see some of those doctrines which seemed, in some degree, almost to have sunk under ground with those holy men, now springing up within the walls of a little Methodist chapel. I will not say that they sprung up alone, or without a

few tares scattered among them by the hands of their new cultivators. But, it must be confessed, that the very first leaders of the Methodists, if men of somewhat coarse taste, and untempered zeal, were men both of talent and piety. For a season, at least, their preaching offended against little, except good breeding and moderation.—They generally avoided disputable ground, and insisted on the fundamental points of religion, in bold, vehement, eloquent, practical, though perhaps somewhat enthusiastic language. They called themselves Churchmen, and I really believe they loved the Church. They opened no meeting when the Church was open. And great was the impression produced by them. They found some spots of this kingdom as untaught as though no Christian minister existed. They dived into the mine and the prison. Many of the clergy started, as from a dream, and buckled on the ministerial armor. I have seen, sir, the church walls dripping with the condensed breath of the almost countless congregations. I have seen the tears of penitential sorrow scooping out to them-

selves white channels in the dingy faces of poor colliers, whose minds before were as dark as the pits they inhabited. I have seen thousands who, as the early Christians brought their books of magic and burned them, cast all their sins and sorrows upon the altar of God, and found that flame consume them all. Great, indeed, as I said, was the effect produced : but, alas ! so great as, among many other far better results, to turn the heads of many of the preachers. For now, sir, mark the change. Soon the respect for the Church, in a great measure, ceased. Soon one of the most common topics of pulpit raillery and amusement was the universal profligacy of the clergy. Soon the widest breaches were made in Church discipline. Soon attempts were made to separate the flock from their shepherd. Soon enthusiasm usurped, in some instances, the throne of sober piety. A large proportion of uneducated men were introduced into their pulpits. A desire to excite, to inflame, to harrow up, to revolutionize, combined itself, to say the least, in many cases, with the desire to convince. Coarse and fanciful

interpretations of scripture abounded. Something very like miracles were assumed by many, to have been wrought in favor of the new system. And the whole, with many better results, issued in a sort of dislocation of the Church: which may, perhaps, in the end, however little foreseen or designed by its authors, assist ultimately to destroy the Church, and to bury religion in its grave."

Here the old Vicar, as though he beheld the precise picture painted in the memoir—his own little church sinking into dust, and religion, in the act of suffocation, just peeping out of one of the graves, clasped his hands together in utter dismay. "My dear," said he, in an agony of grief, "I have had this vision before my eyes a thousand times; and though I daily on my bended knees, thank God for all the profligates reclaimed by the Methodists, in common with other laborers; for their toil and triumphs among the poor idolaters and slaves; and for the sort of stimulus they have supplied to the Church; yet I fear, that they will ultimately overthrow the Church they undertake to support."

"Is it right for you, my love," said the old lady, "to condemn either the character of their religion, or their conduct towards their ministers, when old Betty tells me they preach precisely your doctrines, and even pray for yourself every Sunday of their lives?"

"As to the *entire* resemblance of our *doctrines*," replied the Vicar, "either I or Betty must be mistaken.—For their *prayers* I heartily thank them; and may their God and my God so hear and answer them, as to make me better. Their favorable opinion of me, he continued, smiling, must, I fear, be set down among their errors of judgment. But let us hope, that so charitable a mistake will be forgiven, and that, by my improvement, it may become less of a mistake every day. Still, whatever be their approbation of me, I should even less deserve it than I do, if I suffered it to bribe me into a dishonest applause of them. I must plainly say, that I have an objection both to the character of their religion, and to a part of their practice. Against their religion, I often find reason to object that it has more of

impulse, noise, excitement, of 'fits and frames' than I find either in the Bible or Liturgy. And to their practice, which is, in many respects, admirable, I have this objection, that they too often teach the people to suspect and undervalue their appointed ministers—to love change and novelty—to prefer rash to sober interpreters of Scripture. There was a time, my love, when a good clergyman was regarded as the general father of his flock—when all their wants, wishes, fears, hopes, doubts, and plans, were laid before him—when the sheep followed his voice, and the voice of a stranger, would they not follow—when, if he kept to his Bible, they would cleave to him. Now, this sort of filial feeling is exceedingly weakened. They have shepherds many, and fathers many. The chapel is erected, not always where the duty of the Church is negligently, but where it is faithfully discharged. The preacher in the Church, however unexceptionable, is deserted, at least at one part part of the day, for the preacher at the meeting. The people, when they should be learning, are criticising; and re-

fuse to profit from any minister till they have settled which is the best."

"Does all this," asked the old lady, "alarm you for the Church?"

"I confess," he answered, "it does. These children of ours, and I am sure I do not forget they are our children, serve us as the Hindoos do their irrecoverable or even sick parents. Instead of binding up their wounds, they throw them into the Ganges. This is not humane, or even decent; and, if it were, surely we are not bad enough to be given over."

"And if the Church falls, my love, what will become of the Methodists?"

"I will, in return, my dear, ask you a question. If the branches, angry at what they deemed the inactivity and fruitfulness of the stem, were to succeed in bringing it to the ground, what would happen to the branches?"

"Why, exactly, my love, what will happen," she said, "to my young chickens, if I do not get them under the hen before sunset." So off she went to her little brood.

Whether the image of the hen and chick-

ens, because her own, at once convinced the good old lady, I am unable to say: nor can I say whether the project then rushed into her head, of hatching an egg, which should produce a bird, which should produce a quill, which should, in her dear husband's hand, produce an essay, which should convince all the Methodists and all the world, of the duty of returning to the mother Church. Certain it is, that she, at that instant, did order Betty to set a goose in a favorite corner of the hen-house, which did soon fulfil at least a part of the wishes of her sanguine mistress.

That the Vicar himself may have taken something of a similar resolution, may, perhaps, be inferred from the following lines, which were found, after his death, written on the first page of his folio edition of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, with this title prefixed.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

And is our country's father* fled,
His car of fire can none recall?

* Hooker.

Be *here* his sacred spirit shed,
Here—may his prophet mantle fall.
Fain would I fill the vacant breach,
Stand where he stood the plague to stay;
In his prophetic spirit preach,
And in his hallowed accents, pray.

II.

It is not that on seraph's wing,
I hope to soar where he has soar'd;
This, this the lowly claim I bring,
I love *his* Church, I love his Lord.
I love the altar of my sires,
Old as my country's rocks of steel,
And as I feed its sacred fires,
The present Deity I feel.

III.

I love to know that, not alone,
I meet the battle's angry tide;
That sainted myriads from their throne
Descend to combat at my side.
Mine is no solitary choice,
See *here* the seal of saints impress'd;
The prayer of millions swells my voice,
The mind of ages fills my breast.

IV.

I love the ivy-mantled *tower*,
Rock'd by the storms of thousand years;
The grave whose melancholy flower
Was nourished by a martyr's tears.
The sacred *yew*, so feared in war,
Which, like the sword to David given;

Inflicted more than human scar,
And lent to man the arms of heaven.

V.

I love the organ's joyous swell,
Sweet echo of the heavenly ode;
I love the cheerful village bell,
Faint emblem of the call of God.
Waked by the sound, I bend my feet,
I bid my swelling sorrows cease;
I do but touch the mercy seat,
And hear the still small voice of peace.

VI.

And, as the ray of evening fades,
I love amidst the dead to stand;
Where, in the altar's deepening shades,
I seem to meet the ghostly band.
One comes—Oh! mark his sparkling eye,
The light of glory kindles there;
Another—hear his deep-drawn sigh—
O! tis the sigh of dumb despair.

VII.

Another treads the shadowy aisle,
I know him—'tis my sainted sire—
I know his patient, angel smile,
His shepherd's voice, his eye of fire;
His ashes rest in yonder urn.
I saw his death, I closed his eye;
Bright sparks amidst those ashes burn,
That death has taught me how to die.

VIII.

Long be our Father's temple ours,
Wo to the hand by which it falls:
A thousand spirits watch its towers,
A cloud of angels guard its walls.
And be *their* shield by us possessed,
Lord, rear around thy blest abode,
The buttress of a holy breast,
The rampart of a present God.

CHAPTER XII.

When the Vicar returned to his manuscript, he read as follows:

"I am now, sir, approaching the last great crisis of my life, the time of my finally leaving London for the hills of Westmoreland. The cause of my removal was this. At the moment when the meeting, of which I was the only ornament and superfluity, was built, the parish church was filled by the second son of a noble family, whose want of talents had early designated him, willing or unwilling, to spend the tithes of a considerable living."

"Monstrous," said the Vicar. "I trust such offences are rare. Can any profession demand loftier talents? Shall the representative of God be chosen from the lowest orders of his creation? Shall *he* be selected to enter the sanctuary, to unravel the web of prophecy, to hurl the thunder of Heaven, to unveil that awful image before which angels

hide their faces, to display to thousands the interminable regions of joy and sorrow—who has scarce faculties for the common offices of life? If I had a son with the talents of an angel, I would carry him, like Samuel, to the temple; or, like Hannibal, to the altar of his country, and there consecrate him as the soldier of the cross, the eternal enemy of ignorance and guilt."

"Read on, my love," said the old lady, who saw him here touching on the verge of that topic which of all others most wrung his heart. He understood her, and began again to read.

"The young clergyman was an easy kind-hearted creature, who might have seconded an address, or even have presided at a turnpike meeting with considerable effect; but had neither piety nor vigor for his sacred employment. His people were grossly neglected. The 'hungry sheep looked up, and were not fed,' and they accordingly sought for what they deemed more productive pastures. And the meeting, which promised to supply all their wants, soon filled itself with the stragglers. But the young

incumbent broke his neck in a fox-chase; and his wretched father, softened and shocked at the event, and at the state of the parish, appointed such a pastor to the living as made every good man's heart leap for joy. Our meeting was soon, in its turn, abandoned, and I slumbered over a large surface of empty pews. Upon this the chapel was closed; and I, with the pulpit, conveyed once more to a pawnbroker's. The pulpit was bought by an auctioneer, and I by the church-wardens of this very parish; who, finding rates high, and corn low, and velvet scarce, on account of a war with the continent, carried me off, torn and tarnished as I was, with a phrase not very honorable either to me or to the establishment, saying—'this 'ull do.' Thus, then, sir, bearing the burden of the fattest of these church dignitaries, I was jolted down to this happy valley. This has been the last scene of my life, and, I am free to say, the happiest.

"But, sir, you will be anxious, I am sure, to hear the history of some of your predecessors in the living. And it is my intention to gratify you. I think it right,

however, to observe, that, of a large proportion of them, no very interesting record remains. Mankind are much alike,—and a little country village is not likely to call out their peculiarities. Some few were mere profligates, whose memory I do not wish to perpetuate. Many of them were persons of decent, cold, correct manners, varying, slightly, perhaps, in the measure of their zeal, their doctrinal exactness, their benevolence, their industry, their talents—but, in general, of that natural class which really affords materials for history, or subjects of instruction. They were men of that species who are too apt to spring up in the bosom of old and prosperous establishments, whose highest praise is, that they do no harm.

"The first person whose history I shall give you, is one of a class exceedingly small. He indeed is the only specimen of it that, in my long experience, I have chanced to see; but his errors are of so mischievous a nature, and the punishment of them in his case, was so signal, that I cannot consent to pass them over.

"*Munster*, for so I will call him, was a spoiled child. He lost his father early; and his mother, captivated by the strength of his attachment, which naturally centered all in her, requited it by anticipating all his whims, and indulging all his caprice and ill temper. In consequence, he became peevish, headstrong, and passionate. Now and then, indeed, some better quality seemed, as it were, to flash in his character. But the gleam was only for a moment, and seemed to leave a deeper gloom behind. His feelings were quick—his spirits variable. He loved and hated, worked and idled, laughed and cried, all in a moment, and always in excess.

"When sent to school, he was chiefly distinguished by quarrelling with the larger half of his school-fellows, and forming the rest into a party against them, of which his vehemence rather than his talents or industry, made him the leader. And, the habits of school, he carried to college, where he was chiefly known as a person whom no one liked, and whom every one feared. These numerous defects were, however,

brightened by one more promising quality. He had acquired, under the eye of his mother, who, though a weak, was really a pious woman, a certain awe of gross sin. The effect of this, however, was, not to correct his life, but to reduce it to a sort of alternation of sin and sorrows. Such a life could make no man happy, and especially one who had few friends to cheer him, little real taste for dissipation, and that kind of bilious habit, which is apt to divide the life of its victim between anger and melancholy. In such a state, therefore, he was not likely to remain long. And accordingly, on a sudden, he proclaimed himself a converted character. He forsook at once, not only his vices, but his college occupations—not only his profligate, but his moral companions. His acquaintance looked on with astonishment. The good trembled when they saw such hands laid on the ark of God. The bad scoffed to find religion with such a champion. But Munster went on his way, heedless both of the one, and of the other. He soon entered the Church, and became the curate of this very parish. And here I

shall endeavor to describe him, first, as minister, and next as the father of a family.

"His doctrines were, in the main, those of the Scriptures, and of the Reformers. But then he held and taught them *less practically* than either. His grand maxim, for instance, was, 'preach of faith, and works will follow'—whereas, the Bible and the Church evidently deem the same attention due to both—concluding, that a man is just as likely to act as to think wrong."

"The hands of my watch," said the Vicar, "are quite as incorrect as the wheels. But let us read on."

"Neither did the spirit of *moderation* in these high authorities satisfy him. Sometimes, he so magnified a truth, as to strain it to the dimensions of error. Sometimes he seemed to reduce the whole of religion to a single doctrine. In short, as some men possess the art of giving error the air of truth, so he gave truth the complexion and the character of error. Few men had a better creed; and few put a worse interpretation to it.

"But, however defective his opinions

might be, his life was far worse. Although ardent in the pulpit, and in the discharge of most other *public* duties, his zeal did not extend to the more retired duties of his office. He rarely, for instance, sought out in the remote corners of his parish those sheep of his flock, who either had not yet found the heavenly pastures, or had, unhappily, wandered from them. Those quiet labors, which no eye sees, and no voice applauds but that of God, had no charms for him. To be heard, to be felt, to be admired, in the great congregation, was all he loved. Many are the wounded spirits which he never attempted to heal. Many the broken hearts which he never stopped to bind up. They cried for help, indeed, but their Levite passed by on the other side. When he should have been aiding them, he was gone to act the apostle, or to head the crusade in some public enterprise, to which, not God, but his vanity had called him. Many are those of his parish whose faces he will first recognise at the bar of God—sheep which he should have carried in his bosom—children to whom he should have been as a

father.—Into the secular business of his parish he entered with great eagerness; and, unfortunately for his general influence as a minister, carried into it as worldly a spirit as any of his people—thus proving that the apostle in the pulpit, was a mere man in the ordinary concerns of life; and that, like bad pictures, it was to distance rather than to coloring, his character owed even the little effect it had. His charities were extensive and showy. Rather, indeed, than curtail them, he had much narrowed the education of an only son, designed for the ministry; and even delayed his payments to some by no means affluent tradesmen. And the money, thus doubtfully secured, was, in many instances, ill-bestowed. His gifts were often either partial or ostentatious. They were inscribed, for instance, on the walls of the popular chapel—but rarely on the heart of the afflicted and unobtrusive poor. But, sir, you will be glad, I think, to hear something of the effect of his ministry on his congregation.

"The importance then of the doctrines on which he dwelt, the vigor of his manner,

and a good deal of natural eloquence, ensured him a large and an attentive audience. And, such is the value of truth, even when debased by a mixture of error, that, in many instances, the happiest results flowed from his exertions. Many, through the mercy of God, received the wheat and rejected the chaff—which, with a too nearly approaching liberality, he had scattered around him. They learned from him, for example, to love their Saviour, and that absorbed many baser emotions. They learned, also, to read the Scriptures; and, there, found the antidote, even, for their preacher's errors. To some of his hearers, however, his ministry was far from beneficial. Some timid minds were driven to despair—some bolder spirits urged to presumption. And, in general, his most ardent converts were by no means the most complete Christians. Their tempers, especially, betrayed some defect in their religious system; and showed that a millenium, which should arise from the complete diffusion of his principles, would not be of that kind in which the 'lion should lie down with the kid.'

"But let us now, sir, follow him into his family. As something great and public was necessary to call out his zeal, he was not likely to shine in the domestic circle. There, the stimulus of popular applause could not follow him, and, consequently, those qualities which in public served in some measure to balance his defects, altogether vanished. To his wife, he was too often cold and irritable. His son, who discovered little or no bias towards religion, was repelled still farther from it by the unchanging frowns of his father. Of his daughter, who had early imbibed many of his own opinions and tastes, whose person was fine, whose talents were considerable, and who, in a better soil, might have been expected to ripen into a most interesting and valuable creature, he was extravagantly fond. And, twenty years after his marriage, she alone remained to share either his joys or sorrows. His wife had died early—I will not say of a broken heart—but certainly a troubled mind had hastened the decay of an infirm body. His son had gone to sea; and was rushing into excesses of the most opposite kind to

those of his father. The daughter, therefore, alone remained to smooth the pillow of a somewhat premature old age—to nurse him through sleepless nights, and days of pain—to calm an uneasy mind, and to supply the void created by a popularity gradually declining, as his public powers decayed.

"This daughter, however, loved him; for she had always seen his bright side. And had her education been more complete, her mind better disciplined, her sensibility less morbid, her religion partaken less of the defects of his own—it is possible that, under the blessing of their common Father, this parsonage would have displayed one of the most beautiful of all spectacles—that of a child paying back the early tenderness of a parent, by leading his weary steps into the way of peace. But, alas! neither had oil to spare for the lamp of the other; each did but aggravate the other's infirmities.

"And now, I approach to the really tragical conclusion of his story. The hospitality of Munster was a good deal confined to those who chimed in with him in religious

sentiments—who either echoed, or exceeded his own extravagancies. This select band had full range of his house. And, if they appeared to bear the test as to a few chosen points, he did not stretch them on the rack of a more extended scrutiny. Among those who were thus frequent guests at the vicarage, was a person from a neighboring village, of whom little more was known than that immediately after his first visit to Munster, he had discarded a female of suspicious character from his family, and had vehemently addicted himself to the vicarage, and to religion. These traits were a sufficient passport to the attention of both father and daughter; and before long, he was almost as necessary to the happiness of the one, as of the other. To the father, he talked upon his select topics—fighting under his banners in all controversies, and straining all his extravagancies to something still more extravagant. With the daughter, he neither talked nor thought of controversies; and deluged her credulous ear with far other professions than those of piety. Of this, however, Munster was not un-

conscious; nor was he displeased to learn, that he was likely to be called upon to consign a darling child to the arms of so valuable a protector. In the midst, however, of this career, a sudden check was given to the intimacy, by intelligence that the stranger was a mere adventurer and hypocrite. Munster, at once both forbade him the house, and commanded his daughter to dismiss him. But here the previous misconduct of Munster himself, and the imperfect education he had given her, began to produce their natural consequences. She had seen him so often deceived, capricious, precipitate—with all her love for him, had so little respect for his judgment—and, with all her sanguine religious feeling, so little control over herself, that she could not, even for a moment, resolve to obey her father. And when, after a short time, having consented to clandestine meetings, the stranger loudly proclaimed his innocence, and condemned the base suspicions of her father, she soon acquiesced both in his protestations and his indignation, and agreed to an elopement and a secret marriage. What was

her father's horror to miss her one morning at a breakfast table of which she had long been the only consolation—to discover that she was fled—that she had given herself to a villain, and left an aged parent to break his heart alone.

"Her fate may easily be conceived. A marriage, indeed, took place; and, for a few months, the novelty of her circumstances, and the indignation she felt against her father's conduct, and especially at his neglect to answer a letter she addressed to him, conspired to lay her conscience asleep. But soon the vision dissolved—she received the death-blow of her happiness, and the curse of her disobedience, in the slackening attention of her husband. And, at the end of a year, she was left destitute—a mother—in a state of impaired health and spirits—wanting even the means of existence, in a lodging in London. It is wonderful that, even then, her shattered mind did not break down under the burden of her calamities. But she hastened, as fast as her circumstances admitted, down to Westmoreland. It was night when she reached the parsonage.

She burst open the garden door, rushed up to the window of her father's study, which looked into the garden, and at which there was a light, and saw him seated in his arm chair, pale, emaciated, insane, fastened in a strait waist coat, and his keeper standing over him. She sunk to the ground ; and when, after a month, her bodily health in a measure returned, her mind, as if in sympathy with that of the parent she had destroyed, had contracted the disease of which he died. There were those who had seen parent and child during this month, and heard the father raving for his daughter, and the daughter raving for the father. The fact was, there had been insanity in the family; and, when to a life of unusual excitement, were superadded mortified vanity, disappointed hopes, wounded affections, and, above all, certain awful glimpses of the world to come—all these had served to quicken the seeds of latent disease, and to bring him to the sad state of which his daughter had been a spectator. He sat there, like the fig-tree,—cursed for unproductiveness,—touched and withering under

the angry hand of God. Before the short period of her bodily illness was expired, he died, and his awe-struck parishioners followed to the grave a man whose misfortunes had, in their eyes, cancelled his faults; whom, if they had never loved, they had now, at least learned to pity; and who, they trembled to think, could not have reached that heaven which, in such ardent language, he had often displayed to them. You know, sir, his tomb in the church-yard. I believe the dead pastor has spoken even more powerfully than the living one. Such, indeed, was the awe produced by his death, that his spirit seemed to dwell among the tombs; and few of the country people, for a long time, crossed the church-yard, who did not look suspiciously around them, hasten their steps, and put up a prayer to God, that in them, good principles might issue in a holy life, in obedient passions, and a resigned will.

"His daughter, as I said, recovered her bodily health, but not the tone of her mind. A chord was struck there which never ceased to vibrate. She lingered out twenty years

in a neighbouring mad-house; and many of the parish, who went to visit her, brought back the most touching accounts of her condition. Her derangement had not suspended, though it had confused the memory of her misfortunes. Nor had her religious sensibility abated; but, on the contrary, it seemed to quicken her agonies, and to cast a more awful character over the illusion of her mind. Combining with the representations of Scripture, the splendid images of her own heated fancy, she would occasionally present the most sublime pictures of the glories of heaven, and the triumphs of the *good;* and, then, suddenly striking her bosom, would say, 'but *they* never left a father—they never dishonoured God.'"

Here the story closed, and it was well for the Vicar and his lady that it did; for age had by no means dried up the sensibilities of their nature. He had stopped, as if strangled with grief, at least twenty times, in the narration, before he could read it articulately.—But his was not a mind likely to exhaust itself in useless sorrows. Soon he began to contrast his own happiness with

the calamity of his predecessor—to thank that gracious Being who had preserved him from such an abuse of religion, and to pray for power to unite, in his own life, the holy doctrines, and the heavenly temper of his Master. Nor did he stop here; but found in this history a mournful topic of consolation to himself. "Happy," said he to his sympathizing wife, "the child who is taken from the uncertain wing of his earthly parent to repose in the bosom of his God." Nor did this impression decay. For that this story served to reconcile him to what he had been accustomed to consider as the sternest dispensation of his life, is clear, from the following verses, which were found soon after on the table of his study.

As the sweet flower which scents the morn,
But withers in the rising day;
Thus lovely was my Henry's dawn,
Thus swiftly fled his life away.

And as the flower, that early dies,
Escapes from many a coming wo;
No lustre lends to guilty eyes,
Nor blushes on a guilty brow:

So the sad hour that took my boy,
Perhaps has spared some heavier doom;

Snatched him from scenes of guilty joy,
Or from the pangs of ill to come.

He died before his infant soul
Had ever burnt with wrong desires;
Had ever spurn'd at Heaven's control,
Or ever quenched its sacred fires.

He died to sin, he died to care,
But for a moment felt the rod;
Then, springing on the viewless air,
Spread his light wings, and soar'd to God.

This—the blest theme that cheers my voice,
The grave is not my darling's prison;
The stone that covered half my joys,
'Is roll'd away, and, 'he is risen.'

CHAPTER XIII.

The old gentleman perceived the unperused pages of his manuscript so rapidly diminish, that he was a little perplexed for some days between the desire of reading more, and the apprehension of having no more to read. His determination, however, to husband his little remaining stock soon gave way, and he began to read the history of another of his predecessors.

"I have already, sir, stated to you some reasons why I relate to you the history of no more of your brother incumbents upon the vicarage. Some it would give me pain to relate. Of some I can find nothing to say. Among others, however, who either did wrong, or did nothing, there were many individuals (and I say it to the honor of a Church which both you and I love) worthy of the first and best days of religion. And of one of these, whom I shall call Berkely, I proceed to give you some account."

"I am glad," said the Vicar, "that our friend has taken off his condemning cap. I believe the characters of ministers to have been much calumniated. And, at all events, he is no friend to religion, who delights to depreciate those who minister at her altars. It is not easy to aim a blow at the false prophet of the Lord, without wounding those whose garb he wears. It is not easy even to touch a decayed stone in the altar, without impairing the sanctity, or risking the permanence, of the whole. I do not mean, however, that our gowns should shelter us from scrutiny; but it should be cautiously begun, and kindly conducted. I have, moreover, this objection to sitting too often in judgment upon the more faulty of our fellow creatures, that we gain nothing, but, on the contrary, lose much, by learning there are others worse than ourselves. Surround a person half blind only, with men totally blind, and he begins to value himself upon his powers of vision. *I* love, my dear, to rise above the degraded part of our species —to look through the long perspective of ages—to call up the mighty dead—to en-

compass myself with the vast cloud of witnesses who have triumphed in the contest with the powers of darkness. They both encourage me to contend, and compel me to be humble, whilst inferior men—let us not, however, even speak of them, but turn at once to the bright example which the memoir promises us." He did, and read the following history.

"Berkely was the son of parents, who, though both religious, differed widely in the complexion of their character. His father was a man of high and elastic spirits—attracted by large objects, and pursuing them with ardor, courage, and self-devotion. He looked over the world with a cheerful and thankful eye—saw good in every thing, and wondered that the servants of so good and merciful a God should ever find cause for sorrow or complaint. The mother of Berkely, on the contrary, was a person of low, reflective, nervous temperament,—easily depressed—discerning evils at an incredible distance, and peopling earth, sea, skies, with visionary alarms. Had not the star of religion shone in upon the dark chambers of

her mind, her gloom might have ended in despair. I describe the parents the more minutely, because I think that Berkely inherited some of the qualities of each—or rather their compound character. In him, that life, and joy, and energy, which surrounded the father as a sort of perpetual atmosphere, only gleamed occasionally when called out by certain great objects—by the society of those he loved, by the splendid scenery of nature, or by the grand themes of religion. Then, indeed, so much more of intellect mingled with his sensations, that his joy took a nobler flight, and soared into regions denied to a less vigorous mind. At other times, the spirit of his mother seemed to descend upon him; and a state of depression followed — of depression, however, which by exhibiting him, as it were, amidst the fires of affliction, served to display some of the most touching as well as majestic features of his character. It indicated, however some hidden disease; and perhaps predicted the somewhat premature death that removed him from his friends. From both his parents he inherited the most

exalted piety. Not, indeed, that religion descends in the blood, for the most pious parents often leave no representatives of their virtues; nor did he receive it as a sort of heir-loom and family portion; for few minds were of a more deliberative and scrupulous cast. But seeing it from his infancy, under his paternal roof, surrounded with generous and lofty qualities, his earliest prejudices were on the side of religion, his earliest studies were in pursuit of it, and his earliest decisions in its favor. But, sir, as many of my former communications may have appeared somewhat querulous, as I am anxious to redeem my character before we part (the Vicar here pressed the finger and thumb together which held the remaining pages of the memoir, and was shocked to feel how few they were)—as both you and I love praise, I trust, better than blame,—as, moreover, I wish to bear my testimony to the best man, except *one*, that ever possessed the living; I am resolved to show you him in various and distinct views, so that the whole man may pass before you."

"Who can the one be?" said the Vicar.

"There can be no doubt on that point," rejoined his lady. But he unfortunately left her no time to tell us the secret, and read on.

"In order, sir, to show you, as it were, the keystone of the opinions and character of Berkely, I must state to you one circumstance. From a child he had been remarkable for the most ardent attachment to his father. That name comprehended in it all that was in his eyes venerable and delightful. Hence, filial affection had become with him, not merely a feeling, but a principle. He hoped much of every man who ardently loved a good parent. He feared every thing in one who did not. Often have I seen the tear start from his eye, as he read the history of Joseph; and the blood mantle in his cheek as he read that of Absalom. And such was the power of this master feeling, that it gave a peculiar character even to his religion. For, of all the men I ever saw, he most delighted to represent God under the image of a father. It was to him the most honorable and interesting of all titles, and he transferred it to the Being whom he

best loved. You will soon perceive how much this peculiar feeling shaped and colored all his opinions and practice."

The old Vicar could scarcely find words to express his delight at this statement, so completely did the views of his devout predecessor harmonize with his own.

"Happy," said he, "the father of such a child." But let us proceed.

"This peculiar feeling, as I said, sir, gave a peculiar complexion to all his religious opinions. Thus it inclined him, I think, though he very rarely spoke upon the subject, to that system of religion which represents God as equally disposed to save all his creatures. The Father of the world was not likely, he thought, to have set aside, or pass over, any part of his earthly family. In like manner, it led him to dwell with peculiar emphasis, upon the features of mercy in the character of God. In the conduct of a father, the quality of love would be sure to predominate; and Berkely ever seemed to be searching out, even in the darkest of the divine dispensations, some ray of compassion, which bespoke a parental

hand. 'Even (he would say) amidst the monuments of wrath which sadden the face of the universe, I discern, both in man, and in the world he inhabits, many splendid relics of a nobler creation. It is, indeed, a world of ruins, but of ruins diversified and ennobled by many a lofty pillar, designating the majesty of the original edifice. Look even at the most signal examples of divine vengeance, and love will always be seen sheathing or tempering the sword of justice. When, for instance, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood swept the face of a guilty world; even then, the ark surmounted the waters, and restored the only pious family to an unoccupied globe.—Did the waves of the Red Sea close in upon the hosts, and engulf the chariots of guilty Egypt? Behold a whole people, with their flocks and herds, preserved upon the banks of that very sea, as if to show, that 'in judgment God remembers mercy.' —Did the vault of heaven blaze with unusual fires, and empty its burning deluge on the profligate cities of the plain? There, also, the solitary servant of God is seen

walking unhurt upon the fiery soil, and amidst the atmosphere of death.—Even when the earth shook—when the face of heaven was darkened—when the veil of the temple was rent, and the groans of nature proclaimed the just anger of God,—a voice of mercy was heard amidst the clamors and agonies of the universe—'today shalt thou be with me in Paradise;' and the Son of God ascended to his Father, not dragging at his chariot wheel thousands of his persecutors, but bearing in his arms one poor criminal rescued from the cross.' But, sir, I must not indulge myself in recording the sayings of this good man. His language was like that of one who had been placed in the clefts of the rocks while the divine glory passed by; who had seen, indeed, the majesty of God; but had heard him proclaimed as a God of 'long-suffering' and of 'tender mercy.' It is enough to say that he pleaded for God in the face of a negligent world, as a son would plead for the honors and rights of a revered parent. And many were the hearts which, though unsubdued

by terrors, melted under the ray of his tenderness and love.

"This same fact, to which I have referred, perhaps, also, in some measure assisted to guide his judgment in matters of controversy. His impression was, that, as the child had no right to hope he should comprehend all that was intelligible to the matured wisdom of a parent, far less should man presume to dive into the mysteries of God. That at once taught him to prefer carrying the balance rather than the sword, amidst contending parties in religion. In his days, for instance, as it was much the fashion to dispute upon the inexhaustible topics of Calvinism and Arminianism, it was desired, and expected of all to enlist themselves on one side or the other. And, as his father inclined to the former hypothesis, he was naturally expected to break his lance in favor of the divine decrees. But the young divine soon manifested a disposition, rather to silence, than to controversy upon this disputed point. This encouraged the opposite party to range him under their banner. But here, again, his bias was rather to temper

the warmth of others, than to display his own. It was not that he failed to comprehend the nature of the controversy—or that he viewed any topic of religion with indifference—or that he did not discover in the sacred volume passages favorable to each system. But he soon discovered that this controversy had fruitlessly occupied the attention, and harassed the spirits of good men, in almost every age, and under every system of religion; and that it was not likely to be decided till 'men shall know even as they are known.' He thought the more ardent champions, on either side, generally wrong—inasmuch as both inclined to substitute their own system for the simple creed of scripture, and to twist its straight letter into all the windings of human philosophy. He, therefore, took part entirely with neither—but taught modesty and charity to both.

"But I pass on from his opinions to his *character* as the pastor of a parish. I have said that, in forming his conception of God, he had reasoned upwards from man to God—from the image of an earthly father to the

character of the great and good Being who presides over the world. On the contrary, in moulding his own character, he had reasoned downwards from God to man; and his desire was to be in his parish, according to his mean ability, that which the God of whom he was the representative, was in all the world.

"In the pulpit, accordingly, he was remarkable for speaking, not in the language of the contending parties, but in that of God. I have heard him say, that 'in reviewing his own ministry, almost the only fact on which his eye rested with satisfaction, was the not being able to charge himself with having voluntarily employed a single text for a purpose not designed by its great Author.'

"But, not only did he largely use the language of the Bible—he felt it his duty, as far as possible, to imitate the style of reasoning employed in it, and especially in the ministry of Christ. Like him, he endeavored to seize upon passing events, or objects to illustrate his meaning—like him, to vary his subject with his audience—like

him, to be simple, grave, spiritual, touching, tender. He used to say, 'I think the language of Christ is often much mistaken. Some conceive themselves his imitators, when they confine themselves to the practical parts of religion; forgetting that every fundamental doctrine of religion is strongly urged by Christ, and that its more sublime and mysterious points,—the union of God with man, the influence of the Spirit, the precise nature of the final judgment and happiness of man, are treated by him with a boldness and fulness which would amount to impiety in any other teacher.' Others, again, conceive that they imitate him in acts of rashness and enthusiasm—forgetting that he rigidly conformed to existing rites —that he continued to worship even in those corrupt Jewish synagogues he was about to abolish—that he did not even enter upon his ministry till he was thirty years of age. Now, both these errors Berkely avoided. He taught the truth, but taught it calmly. He touched the harp of the prophet, but not with that unholy vehemence which snaps its chords.

"In general, his manner in the pulpit was rather mild and paternal, than energetic. But there were times, and those not a few, when a new spirit seemed to animate him. His favorite theme was the happiness of the saints in glory; and he really spoke of heaven as though he had been there. I have now his figure before me, as he rose up to address his congregation the first time after the death of his father.—No event had touched him at a more vital point. But, although, as he mounted the pulpit, a sort of cheerless cloud hung upon his brow, in a short time a ray from heaven seemed to disperse it. He was not afraid to touch the chord which might be expected to awaken all the anguish of his soul. Others wept—but he was calm. He spoke of death, but it was of the death of the righteous, and of the blessedness which follows it. Such was the impression of the scene, that as his hearers watched his glowing eye, his gray hair, his peaceful smile, his uplifted hand, his lighted countenance—and saw him, as it were, launch into other worlds, and bring back their spoils to enrich himself in this—

withdrawing the veil from the sanctuary—speaking of things to come as present, they looked at him almost as they would at St. John rising from the dead, to add another scene to his celestial visions.

"Above all, it was his anxious endeavor to display the character of Christ in his own daily intercourse with his parish. 'The life of Christ,' he was wont to say, 'was the life of God upon earth; and, therefore, the fit model for him who desired to be the representative of God to his parish.' 'Human laws,' I have heard him observe, 'differ from the divine government in three points—they do not pardon the penitent, nor reward the good—nor assist men to discharge the duties, the neglect of which they punish.' 'Now,' he added, 'in all these points, every man, and. especially a minister, should endeavor to supply, to those under his care, the deficiencies of the laws.' Such, therefore, was his rule, and most simply and earnestly did he strive to adhere to it. Such was his tenderness to the penitent, for instance, that he stood condemned with some of the sterner spirits in his parish for credu-

lity. But he remembered who it was that saw the prodigal even when afar off, and made haste to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him. I have more than once seen him, when some poor offender asked doubtingly, 'whether it was possible he could ever be forgiven,' point with an eye full of tears, to a fine picture of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus, which hung in his study. In like manner, it was his constant endeavor, as far as he was able, to reward those who deserved it. Many a child carried in its little box some cherished memorial of the kind old Vicar; and many a Bible, even to this day, sheds a ray of comfort and splendor from the shelves of a cottage on which his approving hand originally placed it. As to the remaining duty of assisting his people in the discharge of their duties, for this, he rose early and late took rest. He built that little school, which you, sir, so often visit—he enlarged that altar for his increasing flock of communicants, where you so often shed tears of sacred joy, as you dispense the bread of life to hungry souls.

"I had thought, sir, of showing you this

revered man in the circle of his family. But the fact is, that his parish was only his larger family, and his family his smaller parish. Those who had seen him in the one, could determine what his conduct would be in the other. It was the same flower transplanted to a somewhat different soil. Not, indeed, that he was among those who thought that the domestic should be sacrificed to the public duties of a clergyman. On the contrary he felt that his first duties were at home; that this was the little garden which his God expected him, first, to rescue, and fence in from the waste. 'That love,' he said, 'which pretends equally to embrace all mankind, with no peculiar affection for our own family, is a circumference without a centre—or no love at all.' But from the general harmony of his conduct, abroad and at home, it would, as I said, be mere repitition to describe his conduct in his own house. Here, therefore, sir, I stop, only stating to you one circumstance; that his monument is that white old stone on the right side of the altar. A hundred times have I seen the poor and

miserable steal up to that spot, merely to lay their hand upon the stone, as though they fancied virtue would come out of it, or as though it could be to them what the man it covered had formerly been—a sort of guardian angel—a comforter—a friend. And such is the forbearance and compassion with which the heavenly 'Comforter' views such acts of affectionate and chastised superstition, that I scarcely ever saw one of these pilgrims who did not retire with a happier countenance than he went. Others, I have seen, both in prosperous and adverse circumstances, approach the stone merely to inscribe some memorial upon it—some testimony, prompted by a full heart, to him who had taught them to bear the one with patience, and to enjoy the other with moderation. These inscriptions possibly even now remain; and, perhaps, you may feel disposed to decipher them."

Here the manuscript, as the Vicar thought, and perhaps, as the reader may think, abruptly terminated. On the whole, however, it could not perhaps have terminated at a better place; partly because his

They each laid their hands upon the tomb. Page 169.

eyes refused any longer to do their office, and partly because he had now a new object in the examination of this hallowed grave.

"My love," said he, "the sun will soon set, let us make haste and feast ourselves on this sacred spot. I have often observed the stone, but I little thought it was the casket of such a precious gem. There is no name inscribed upon it, but I have no doubt it is written elsewhere."

She gladly obeyed, and they reached the altar just as the sun was beginning to sink in the west.

"Both," said the Vicar, pointing to the descending orb—"both set; and both shall rise in another hemisphere, and with renewed splendor."

By a sort of simultaneous impulse, natural enough to two hearts so entirely in unison, they each laid their hands upon the tomb. It was not that *they* wanted comfort, but they longed to touch the only relic of the venerable man,—and, in the best manner they could, to join hands with one to whom in spirit they were so entirely united. They

soon began to search for the promised inscription, nor did they search in vain. In one place they found, half blotted as it were with tears—"My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." In another—"he was a good man." In a third—"the memory of the just is blessed." In a fourth—"alas! my brother."

Now, whether this last inscription, which is the lamentation of the "old prophet" over "the man of God," suggested the idea to the Vicar, or not, it is difficult to say; but he had no sooner read this, than, taking his wife tenderly by the hand—"My dear," said he, "till now, I have felt a complete indifference, so that I lay in the midst of my dear parishioners, in what precise spot this poor heap of dust and ashes should be deposited. But I feel this indifference no longer,—and if you think me deserving the honor, I would say to you, in the words of one who like myself had deep cause, as he stood over the grave of a good man, to feel his own guilt and infirmities—'when I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre where

the man of God is buried—lay my bones beside his bones.' "

As the old lady never allowed herself to think that he who was a part of her life could be taken away, and her own life be continued; and as she had always contemplated his death as the hour of his release and triumph, she cared little where the grave should be, so that she might descend to it together with him.

"How it brightens," she said, as they returned home, "the prospect of future happiness, to hope that we shall see in heaven, not only the good we have known, but those of other ages whom we have not known."

"Yes," he answered, "and see them, not clothed with infirmities, but as the disciples saw Moses and Elias, on the mount, invested in all the splendor of heaven. Nor shall we merely see them, but perhaps be placed under their tuition and guidance. They will have been daily purging off their impurities in the fountain of life, and imbibing new light in the blaze of the eternal throne. And, perhaps, to them it will be given, to educate those for the higher region of glory,

who have recently escaped from the body. They will have 'seen God as he is' for so many ages—will have witnessed the trial and judgment of so many generations—will have enjoyed so long the perpetual sunshine of the Divine presence, that they must have much to impart to those newly rescued from the chambers of darkness and of death. Our teachers here, my love, may possibly be our instructors there. And the venerable man, over whose grave you have just shed such pious tears, may be commissioned, not merely to wipe away your tears, but to teach you the song of angels, and lead you to God and to the Lamb."

In this spirit, and with these visions of glory, the aged couple reached their quiet home; and, as they stood over the lake to catch the last ray of evening, its smooth and still illuminated surface seemed to present an apt image of themselves. They had peace in their bosoms, and heaven reflected in their face. I will not say that they felt no regret at having finished the favorite manuscript. But those who enjoyed such hopes as theirs, could not long

want any thing else to comfort them, and in these hopes they lived and died. The desire of the Vicar was fulfilled—his bones were laid by those of his predecessors—and, after a few weeks, hers were mingled with his. Of none could it be more truly said—"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided."

In conclusion, I would only beg, that if any of the readers of this little history should journey amidst the majestic scenery which surrounds the spot on which they dwelt, and should hear a single bell echo among the rocks, or die upon the lake beneath, they would turn aside to view the simple graves I have described. In the bleak and barren mountains, or the rocky defiles around them, they may see, indeed, many an august monument of the power of God. But, in the tombs of these holy men, they will discover monuments of his mercy—enduring testimonies that he is good, and that his people are happy. And if their feelings are such as mine, they will kneel at that altar—they will pledge themselves to the service of so

compassionate a God—they will say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his."

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